Michigan Atari Magazine

Your Atari Interface

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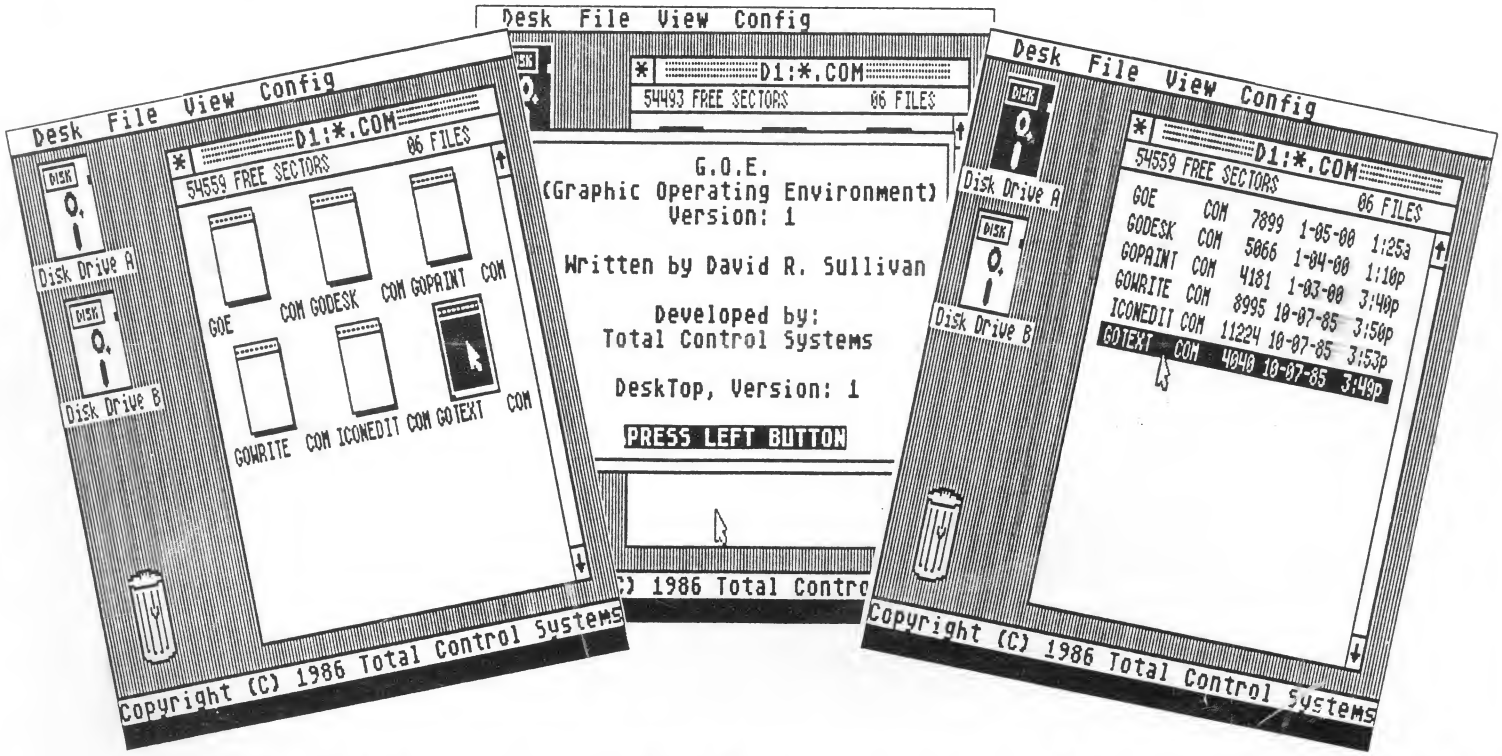
Vol. 3 No. 9
Oct. 1988

Get Up and GOE!



ST-Like Graphic Operating System

For Atari 8bit

Also In This Issue

ST PictaScan and IMG Scan

Word Perfect — Nite Lite BBS

NewsStation and News Station Companion

BBS Blocking (A Serious Threat to Free Speech)

XF551 Disk Drive Power LED Modification

Accelerating the ST

and MORE ...

New ST Version

August 8, 1940
To: Members of Fighter Command
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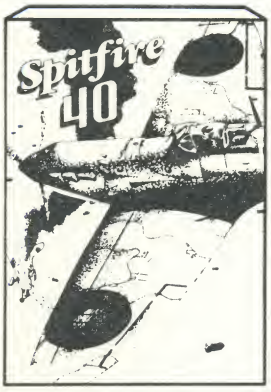
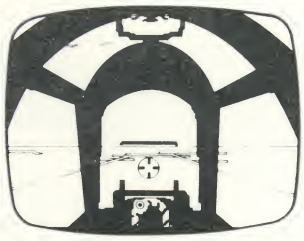
Spitfire 40





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MAM this Month

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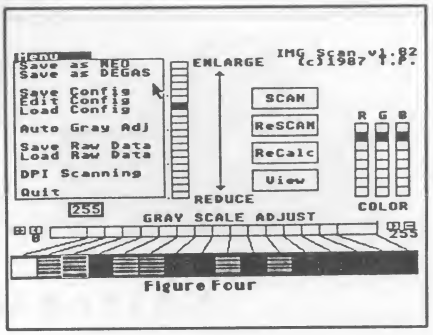

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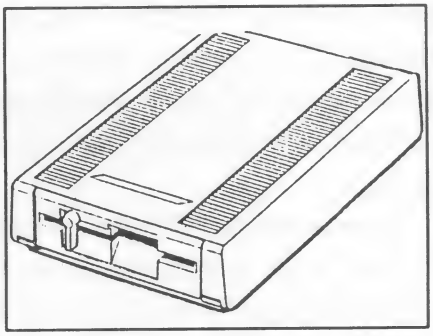

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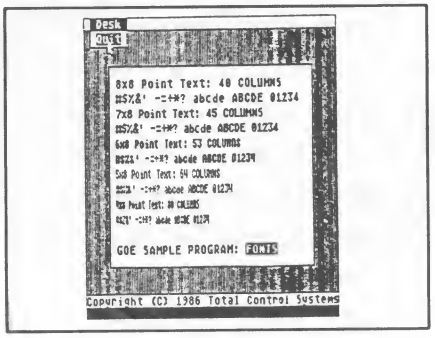

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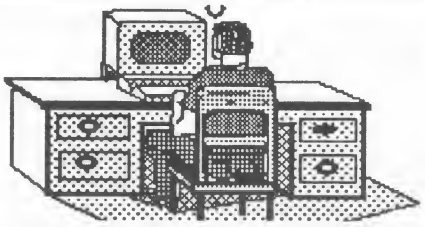

Editorial Ramblings

This month, Jerry Cross (GAG) brings us news from Iowa about BBS blocking that has potentially serious consequences to all telecommunications, and a call from David Sullivan of Total Control Systems brought us some very good news about the 8bit GOE cartridge. Leroy Valley (TAG) returns with an ST Notes' head-to-head comparison of IMG Scan and ST Pictascan, while Tom Sturza (MACE) gives us a taste of 8bit desktop publishing with Reeve Software's News Station and News Station Companion.

If you're an ST owner who wants to put your machine into maximum overdrive, Bryon Johnson (GLASS) gives an overview of products to enhance the speed of your ST. We also have an XF551 double-feature where Brent Fisher (CACE) reviews Atari's double-density drive and Dave Bryant (GKAUG) shows how to add a Power Indicator LED to make life with the XF551 a little easier. All this, and more, including Gordon Totty's (MACE) entertaining "Vacation" article, awaits inside.

MAM has been getting more national attention lately, with a recent article in ZMag #120. While we don't agree with many of the comments made by John Deegan, we have talked with Ron Kovacs and Zmag will be printing our reply in an upcoming edition. Look for it on your local bulletin board, and your comments are more than welcome!!

Until next month,

Bill & Pattie Rayl

People Who Make It All Possible

Managing Ed: Patricia Snyder-Rayl
Editor: Bill Rayl
Comic Strip: Steve Volker
Contributors: David Bryant, Jerry Cross, Brent Fisher, Byron Johnson, John Nagy, Jim Schmickley, Rod Smith, Tom Sturza, Gordon Totty, LeRoy Valley, and all the participating user groups.

What We Are

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Atari News and Comment

News Analysis by Bill Rayl

At the top of the Atari news this month, plans for AtariFests seem to be going well in a number of areas. As I write this, the Glendale Atari Fest in California is winding to a close. Although attendance was reportedly not as great as hoped, the show was a good one.

Dave Small was there selling his Spectre 128, the Macintosh emulator that uses 128K ROMs, allowing ST owners to run HyperCard applications and piles of other excellent Mac applications. Dave's new company is Gadgets by Small.

Also at the show, Charles Johnson and John Eidsvoog of Codehead Software were selling their G+Plus GDOS replacement and Multi-desk, a great utility that allows ST owners to load as many desk accessories as memory permits. You can even load new accessories after the system is up and running or from within a running program. (Codehead Software, PO Box 4336, North Hollywood, CA 91607)

Application and Design Software was displaying version 2 of the very popular Universal Item Selector, Regent Software was there with their excellent line of database and productivity products and Supra was demonstrating their line of hard drives for Atari machines. And, yes, Atari was there as well!

Also, a company called JRI was showing GenLock, an impressive piece of hardware for ST owners interested in professional video applications. GenLock will be available soon for the Megas and is in development for 520/1040s. This hardware allows for composite video output to NTSC RS-170/A devices and provides separate jacks for video input, video output and audio output as well as allows an additional RGB monitor jack for viewing combined computer images. Professional video artists and animators will definitely be interested in this product! (JRI, PO Box 5277, Pittsburg, CA 94565)

The two graphic operating environments for the 8bit Atari were both at the show. Reeve Software was selling Diamond OS for $30. Word is the disk-based Diamond can support up to 16 megs of internal memory.

A bigger splash was made by Total Control Systems, who was demonstrating the GOE cartridge-based ST-like environment. According to show attendees, GOE "looks like a total close of the ST's GEM," and performed beautifully during the entire show. [Editors' Note: See the article on the GOE Cartridge elsewhere in this issue.

The long-awaited SpartaDOS X cartridge was at the show, and ICD was selling them for $80. The "piggyback" cartridge allows other cartridges to plug directly in, and improvements to the DOS include allowing over 1,000 files per directory, faster disk access and built-in ARC and ALFcrunch support.

Other Atari shows on the calendar are the Washington, DC area show which should have ended before you read this (October 2-3), and the Toronto AtariFest which will be held on November 6th. Sponsored by the Toronto Atari Federation (TAF), the one-day show will feature a number of new product demonstrations, lectures and hands-on workshops. Atari Canada will also be there. For more info, call (416) 425-5357 or contact TAF's president, Jim Clark, at (416) 928-1143. Exhibitors should contact Jim Jorritsma at (416) 242-3413.

On the Michigan front, MAGIC has reported the October meeting with Atari officials has been cancelled. Atari reportedly cancelled the meeting because it was too close to COMDEX. Here at MAM, we sincerely hope an AtariFest does happen in Michigan in the near future because all area user groups benefit from the interaction with each other these shows bring about. There is a possibility an Atari Fest will take place here with or without Atari's involvement, but nothing definite has gotten to us about that possibility.

A 16bit XL/XE?

On the 8bit Atari horizon, DataQue Software of Ontario, Ohio, has announced a hardware upgrade allowing 8bit Atarians to put a 16bit CPU into their machine. This gives you the speed and power of a 16bit computer and the ability to add up to 16 megs of internal memory! And the best part is that, since the upgrade uses an 65C02 processor (the only direct 16bit descendant of the 6502), the hard-

ware maintains compatibility with most of the software available for the machines.

The Turbo-816 is slated for availability in November and will come with Turbo-OS that will contain a floating point library built-in. Other products DataQue reports are planned include a real-time multi-tasking operating system kernal, a new assembler/editor/debugger supporting the new assembly instructions and addressing modes, a new BASIC and K&R- compatible C package, a graphic operating system called Turbo- GOS and a developer's kit. For more information, contact DataQue Software, Dept. T-800, PO Box 134, Ontario, Ohio 44862.

8bit peripherals on the ST

Darek Mihocka, programmer of the ST Transformer 8bit Atari emulator, is working on an interface that will allow Atari 8bit SIO peripherals to connect directly to the ST, primarily for use with the Transformer. Currently, Darek's emulator has support for player missile graphics and has shaped up to be a very impressive piece of work. MAM has always been very supportive of the 8bit emulator, and we applaud Darek for all the work he's done. Keep up the great work, Darek, it's definitely appreciated!

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Mouse Master is another innovative switchbox that allows you to instantly switch between your mouse and joystick (or other controller)! You can also plug in a second joystick so there's no more frustrating cable swapping. It's compact case is attractively styled in a neutral gray color and a 26" cable is included for comfortable use by either right or left-handers. For the Atari ST or Commodore Amiga. $39.95*.

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THE MASTER SERIES

WordPerfect for the Atari ST
Six Months and Three Revisions Later

by Rod Smith (WAUG)

In the March, 1988 issue of MAM, I reviewed WordPerfect, then a barely finished program which should still have been in beta testing. I concluded that "most people should avoid WordPerfect" because they "would be happier with Word Writer, or perhaps the new version of 1st Word." I did make an exception for people eligible for the educational discount on the program, but only if such people really *needed* the power offered by WordPerfect.

In the half year since that time, three more revisions to the program have been released. (Perhaps more; it's hard to keep track of these disks they keep sending me!) The latest, the August 1st version, I received a couple of weeks ago. I am glad to say it addresses most of the bugs present in the original release of WordPerfect. Even in earlier revisions, program crashes became a rarity.

Problems with proportional printing have been fixed, although not all printer definitions are set up to support this feature. The "Reveal Codes" window no longer scrolls annoyingly every time the cursor is moved. Accidentally choosing to save a file in "locked" form no longer prevents saving it without a password. In sum, the list of fixed bugs is almost as long as the list of bugs was in January.

Note, however, that I say it is *almost* as long. There are still bugs, including some which can cause a great deal of annoyance and lost time. As mentioned, printer definitions may not support proportional printing; and although it is easy enough (now) to fix this, the user should not have to do it, and many would not know how to do it.

Table of contents generation has problems with certain styles. The built-in print spooler may choke under certain conditions. And it is still possible to crash the program, although the only way I know to do it is by entering a particular sequence of changes in the setup module.

WordPerfect now delivers on much of its promise

In sum, the program is not bug-free, despite the claims made by WordPerfect Corporation they had released a fixed version. (These claims, incidentally, were also made about the previous release, which had twice as many bugs as the current one does.)

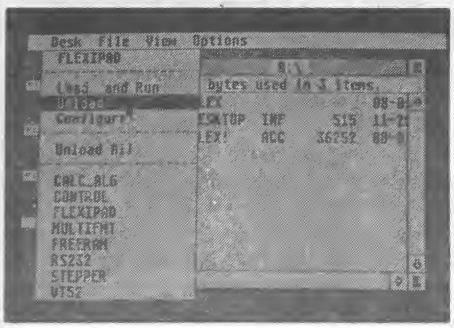
Given WordPerfect is now a usable program, even by relative novices, my recommendations can change, although they are now less simple. Because of its complexity, the program is not easy to learn to use, although it isn't difficult once learned.

The manual is also good in teaching the novice to use the program. Those who are scared off by complexity might thus be best to avoid WordPerfect in favor of a simpler program. As six months ago, Word Writer and ST Writer spring to mind as good alternatives. This is not to say novices need necessarily avoid WordPerfect; if you are willing to invest some time and effort into learning a program, need the features, and are willing to pay the price, go ahead and buy. Be aware, however, that WordPerfect does not conform to many of the ST's standards, and it may occasionally behave in unexpected ways. Don't be afraid to use WordPerfect's customer support; if you bought the program, you've certainly paid for it! If you're a seasoned computer user who's looking for a word processor with more uumph than others on the ST market, WordPerfect is the only choice, and no longer a bad one. However, some of the more sophisticated features may not work 100% as advertised.

Given that WordPerfect Corporation has released four updates total, however, chances are good that they will fix what bugs remain. Be sure to report any you discover, though; they can't fix an esoteric bug which they don't know exists.

Students and educators looking for a word processor should give WordPerfect even more serious consideration, since WordPerfect Corporation offers the program for only $100 on an educational discount.

In sum, WordPerfect now delivers on much of its promise. It's still not for everybody -- a program of its complexity and price cannot be -- but it is the program for those who are serious about their word processing.



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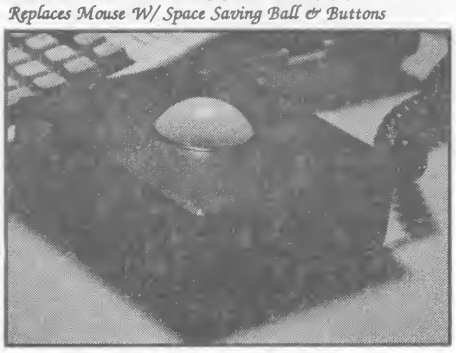

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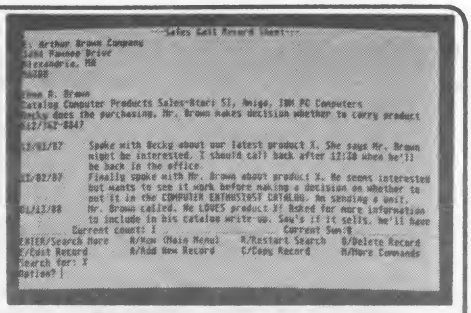

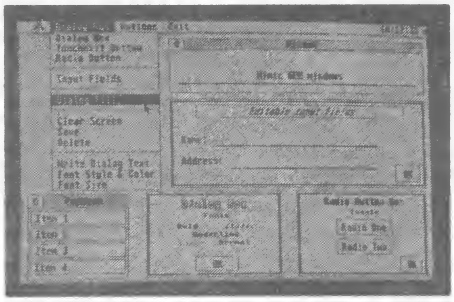

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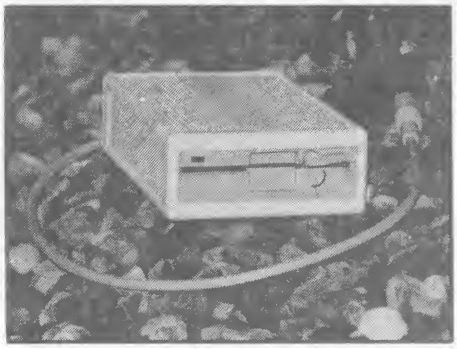

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8Bit Atari Desktop Publishing
News Station from Reeve Software

Review by Tom Sturza (MACE)

Once upon a time, back in the days before Atari ST computers, 8bit computers were used to create many User Group newsletters. The vast majority of articles were written using word processors, and the newsletter editor then did a cut 'n paste job prior to sending everything to the printer.

The term "Desktop Publishing" hadn't been coined yet. Many of the features that we would one day see in such products were already being used, but not in one software package. Articles were either delivered to the editor on floppy disks or uploaded to the User Group's BBS. The editor then printed these articles on one printer (so the newsletter looked the same throughout the entire issue). If an author or newsletter editor wished to "dress up" their work with pictures, they were printed separately and then pasted onto the desired page. Print Shop (tm) icons became very popular.

Well, Reeve Software has introduced Desktop Publishing for Atari 8bit computers. The News Station and the News Station Companion were recently released as typesetting programs for these computers. Text and graphics can now be combined onto one page using just one program. No more cut 'n paste! Custom print fonts and different sizes of text can be used to create unique output. The program documentation says "a high quality, professional look" can be given to printed materials created using this product. I'll let you be the judge of that when you look over the sample page I've created.

My initial feelings concerning The News Station and it's Companion program are mixed. I agree that Reeve Software has created a much needed product for 8bit Atari computers. For the most part, the software does what the program documentation says it will do. However, there are limits concerning the amount of text (number of words) that will fit on a page/plate. Other features, or the lack of features, in this software also affected my opinion.

First, look at the sample page following this article. I've included the main features of The News Station and it's Companion program on this page. Rather than repeat this information, I'll assume that you've read through the sample as I continue with this review.

As you can see, the sample page is divided into eight sections or plates (two across by four down). The top two plates are displayed as one double-wide plate. It was created using the "expand plate" option of the Companion program. Each section or plate had to be created separately and saved to a work disk. The creation of plates is done in the EDITOR option of The News Station program. Once all plates are saved, the PRESS option is used to select plate order and to actually print the whole page.

Text can be entered either by typing directly into a plate or by loading ASCII text files. The EDITOR supports different sized text characters from "1 by 1" to "8 by 8." I entered the majority of the sample page using a width and height of "1 by 1." When using the "1 by 1" character size, each plate can hold a maximum of 20 lines, with 40 characters per line. However, if you do so, side by side plates will "run together." I recommend limiting text to 35-36 characters per line.

Even though The News Station can load ASCII text files into a plate, the small size of each plate effectively limits the usefulness of this feature. Text is loaded starting at the current cursor location on the plate being edited. Since the program does NOT have "word wrap" capability, you must not exceed 40 characters per line or 20 lines per page (in "1 by 1" size) or text will be lost. This means that your ASCII text file must have [RETURN] characters at the end of each line and you must control how many lines will be used when you type your text on your word processor.

The News Station EDITOR does not have a full-featured word processor (and Reeve Software makes no claims that it does). It does not support word wrap, insert mode or "delete and shift remaining characters to the left." Also, a spell checker is not provided. You type to the end of a line and hit [RETURN] to advance to the next line (just like using a typewriter). The left margin position can be set by placing the cursor in the desired

column and pressing [CONTROL]-M. However, you cannot set a value for the right margin. If you wish to change already entered text, you can type over it or delete backspace. I believe you can see why I don't think that The NewsStation was really intended for use on large newsletters or for large articles. On 8bits, a word processor would still be my first choice. The program documentation mentions "you will now have the power to design signs, posters, notices, brochures, advertisements and other literature," and I agree. News Station will handle smaller print jobs with ease. For example, a 2-3 page newsletter that covers a few short items on each page would work just fine. News Station is ideally suited to such information. Print Shop(tm) icons (pictures) could also be used to "dress up" the document. The final product would have an "attention grabber" appearance when compared to using just a word processor.

Some additional comments: The program documentation is well done but could use some clarification. I did find a few typos and omissions that would be confusing to the first time user. I have written to Reeve Software concerning these items.

Print Shop(tm) icons can be printed in three different sizes and can be placed almost anywhere on a plate. You can use the plate EDITOR graphics mode to change and/or draw pictures. Any 9 sector print font can be used for text. I found many of the fonts on the MACE Print Shop(tm) label maker program diskette worked well. The program supports many of the popular printers.

Reeve Software has delivered a well thought-out and executed software package. However, I believe a few changes and/or additions to the documentation and programs will make The News Station and The NewsStation Companion even better products for 8bit Atari computers. If you wish additional information, you can contact: Reeve Software, 29W150 Old Farm Lane, Warrenville, IL 60555 (312) 393-2317. The News Station is $29.95, and the News Station Companion retails for $29.95.

NEWS STATION RELEASED FOR ATARI 8-BIT COMPUTERS

FEATURES:

* Compatible with any standard 9 sector print font
* Will load ASCII files into editor
* Adjustable character height & width
* Load Print Shop(TM) icons directly into the editor
* Compatible with standard picture files
* Graphics mode uses joystick, Koala Pad or keyboard
* Set margins & line spacing for text
* Supports the following printers:
  Star SG10/NX10/gemini 10X
  Panasonic 1080/1090 series
  Prowriter Citizen 120D
  ATARI XMM801 Epson MX80/RX80

The News Station is designed to create a one page document, made up of eight plates (or sections). These plates are then printed two across and four down the page.

The "Plate Manipulator" feature found on the News Station Companion was used to create the title or heading section at the top of this page.

First a single plate was created; then the plate was expanded into two side by side plates. This feature creates a PLATE1 and PLATE2 when used.

NEWS STATION MAIN FEATURES

The News Station has 2 main features:

1) A Plate Editor that allows you to combine graphics and text on the same plate; and to SAVE each plate to a work diskette.

2) The Press, that supports selected print drivers or allows you to build custom ones. It is here that you choose the order you wish to print your plates and then actually print the page.

NEWS STATION COMPANION

FEATURES:
1) PLATE MANIPULATOR expands plates vertically or horizontally; or centers a plate horizontally.
2) KOALA CONVERTER converts Koala Pad pictures into News Station format.
3) LIBRARIAN compresses 8 plates into one compact file.
4) ASCII CONVERTER for converting word processor files.

When using height and width equal to one, you can have a text plate that contains up to 20 lines of print, forty characters per line.

HARDWARE USED TO TEST THE NEWS STATION

* ATARI 130XE COMPUTER
* ATARI 1050 DISK DRIVE
* ATARI 850 INTERFACE UNIT
* PROWRITER PRINTER

STOP You can load a Print Shop icon almost anywhere on the plate (program will tell you if you are too close to an edge).

However, when placing plates next to one another, you cannot use forty characters per line, because the text will run together.

Different SIZES of text can be mixed on each plate.

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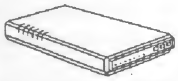

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Accelerating the ST

by Byron Johnson (GLASS)

Just recently, I had to put my ST in the shop for repairs (I sure wish Atari had provided a connector for memory expansion) and borrowed another one from a friend. It made me realize how many improvements I had made to speed up the operation and make "computering" more enjoyable and productive. Perhaps you may benefit from my trials and tribulations in searching for the "Fastest ST alive."

First of all, let's concentrate on the existing features, then we'll move into the add-ons. The Control Panel Accessory is probably the best known ACC but the least utilized. Did you know that by changing the key repeat rate and key delay rate you can speed up page and line scrolling within programs like word processing, database, spreadsheets, and telecommunications programs not to mention practically every other text-orientated program. The slider next to the "finger on a key" changes the key delay rate, useful for typing a row of dashes or moving across the page horizontally. The slider next to the rabbit and turtle controls "key repeat rate" and determines how many characters a second will be generated from holding down a key. Both of these keys need to be changed as your typing gets faster and you progress in this crazy game we call computing.

Next is the mouse double-click rate. It's the numbers 0 to 4 with the two mice next to them. It controls how fast or slow you can click the mouse and select an item. This also will change as your typing improves. Use a lower number to speed up the click select rate.

Whenever you first turn on your ST, you should always make a point of setting the date and time. This makes it easy to determine when you wrote a document and if it's a new or old version of a document. Since I use a monochrome monitor about 90 percent of the time, I like to reverse the colors, a black background and white letters.

This is a lot easier on my tired eyes after staring at a monitor at work all day. With color monitors, using a medium blue, green, brown or black with a light color for text does about the same thing. Of course, after setting up the system the way you want, be sure and save the desktop for your next session. I sure wish this would work on the IBMs at work!

Now for the real goodies. Let's start with Universal Item Selector Version 2. When you run a word processor program, a file selector box will pop up on the screen and ask you for a file name to load or create. If you need a file from another drive, you have to click on the path line above the box and retype the line to access another drive. This gets to be a pain in the neck after a while. With Universal, just click the new drive letter, and it gets the directory for you with a single click. Plus it's faster than the built-in selector because it's written in assembly language. It also adds dozens of new and easier to use commands like MOVE, PRINT, RAM FREE, FIND, LOCK/UNLOCK FILES, and better disk formatting commands, etc. For eighteen dollars, it's a steal. You won't believe how much improved the ST is with this one.

Next is Turbo ST Version 2. This is a optimized version of existing text routines written in assembly language. Once again, much faster response and improved operation from this 41 dollar program.

If you do a lot of printing, then a external hardware print buffer is a natural. This will allow you to print documents, text files, readme files and so on without tying up the computer. This one add-on feature alone will increase your productivity many times over. Even if only printing mailing or disk labels, or occasional doc files from the desktop, this buffer keeps you thinking and involved with your computer instead of waiting for a print-out to end.

The newest program in my auto folder is Mouse Doubler. It doubles the movement of the cursor, so you don't move the mouse as far as you used to. The little guy really moves! Next is a ram disk to speed up archive and un-archive operations, run compilers for programming languages, view slides very quickly and so many more applications. Many fine public domain ram disks are available, my favorite is STI_RAM from ST Informer. This software creates a disk drive of any size in RAM mem-

ory. Assuming you have enough memory to run it (one megabyte usually needed).

If you've read this far, maybe a hard drive is in your future. Programs will load typically in four seconds not the usual twenty seconds from a 3.5" micro drive. Files also save much faster to a hard drive. The organizational capabilities keep all your regularly used software at your fingertips. Practically no time lost looking for a disk, plus you can configure the program just the way you want it and add on public domain upgrades and additional features without running out of disk space.

AND don't forget about the new TOS (Tramiel Operating System) due out this fall from Atari. I hear it's already available to developers, and is the first significant improvement made to the ST since TOS was put on ROM.

In the future, the Turbo ST folks are working on a graphics version of Turbo ST to speed up GEM functions. With the present success of the text version, I can't wait for the graphics version. As for Atari's blitter chip, where is the blitter chip? I wonder if Atari will ever optimize and rewrite the operating system in assembly language, add multi-tasking, improve the hard drive capabilities (expanding the partition limit from 4 to 12 or more), expand the partition size from 16 to 32 megabytes, add better built-in sound, better graphics, a faster microprocessor, plug-in memory expansion modules and a math co-processor? Well, I can hope, can't I?

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Nite Lite BBS System

by Jerry Cross (GAG)

I have always wanted to run a multi-line bbs! I would drool over the ads for those multi-modem cards for the IBM, or listen to the ravings of those Amiga owners bragging about their multi-tasking computers that can run multi-line BBSes (they never mentioned how they would hook up several modems to the single RS232 plug though!). So, I just sat around waiting for Michtron to come through with their long-promised interface, and stared at the pile of modems I own, now stacked 5 high!

Then, one day I received a letter in the mail. A small company named Nite Lite Systems was selling a bbs system that would allow up to 7 lines to be connected to an Atari ST, and they would even throw in the software as part of their promotion. Well, I jumped on deal right away.

The entire bbs system comes in two parts. One is the interface, the other is the software. Since the interface is capable of working on any type of computer supporting RS232 communications. I will review each of these separately. First, the interface.

The interface is actually a multiplexer, sort of like a self-contained computer with it's own memory, processor and operating system. There are several modems. The SP480 (4-line interface) and SP 808(8-line interface) use a 65C02 processor, and have 8k of memory. The SP432 and SP832 interface are identical, but contain 32K of RAM instead of 8K. This allows you to program the interface in many ways, such as allowing it to be a self-contained BBS system all by itself. All you would need to do would be to connect any computer with a standard RS232 port and set it up. Once set up it would run on it's own, allowing you to remove the computer for other uses.

The Nite Lite interface will work with any modem that supports the DTR pin, allowing the interfact to take control of the modem. This allows you to use many of the inexpensive dumb modems on the market, and can save you several hundred dollars in modem costs. However, if you are using a Hayes compatible or some other "smart" modem you may have some problems. I have had some difficulty resetting the modems after each call, which could be easily fixed by sending a string of initialzation commands to the modem. But the interface does not allow this.

One of the many possibilities of using a self-contained BBS on the SP432/832 interfaces would be to set up a remote location and allow other interfaces to connect into it. For example, by setting up an interface in a city supported by PC Pursuit, you could connect a number of other bulletin boards together at little cost, allowing for a "nationwide" conferencing network! One obvious use of this interface would be to connect several computer terminals together for a point of sales system or some other sort of shared networking system. David Beckmeyer currently sells MTC shell that would work nicely for such an application.

The interface itself is well built, and so far I have had no serious problems with it, other than having the transformer burn out. But since it uses a standard type of power supply picked up at Radio Shack, this was only a minor inconvenience.

There is one problem, however, with the interface. Since this is actually just another type of computer, you need software to operate with it. A computer without software is doomed to failure. So far, none of the software companies have taken interest in this product, which is a shame. The possible applications this product could be used for is endless. A multi line bbs is only one example. How about using it in a classroom to share a single printer and hard drive with a number of other computers? Remember, you only need one Atari ST to act as host (and none at all if you used the SP-432/832 interface). You could connect RS232 compatible directly into the interface ports, so you could use inexpensive computers to access the program.

The second part of this product is the software. As I mentioned before, none of the software companies have decided to support the Nite Lite interface, so they had to write their own. In reviewing the software, it's necessary to compare it to other products, such as Express ST, Forum, BB/ST, and many other programs. Each of these programs has good and bad points, but many SysOps will swear the one they use it the best. Also, there are four points that should be considered when looking at software. It's file transfer capabilities, it's message handling, how user friendly it is, and how easy it is for the SysOp to maintain.Also, the recent crop of BBS programs must be more flexible and allow the sysop to program other features into it, like games or application programs. More

powerful programs allow for running TOS programs or other types of "doors."

Another thing to consider is the cost. With public domain programs you get what you pay for, so you can't complain. Others, like Express and Forem, run around $50-75. Nite Lite sells their program for $99. I received my software free as part of a user group promotion package. Even so, this software comes in as the most expensive software of all the Atari ST bbs programs.

So, how does Nite Lite stack up to these programs? *Terrible!* When I started investigating this program to see if I should buy it, it was still new. There were very few Nite Lite BBSes I could call to check out the way the program worked, and the few that were out there had very limited access. This is understandable since the cost of operating a multi-line bbs is not cheap, and they were asking for user fees (which I also did to a limited extent). There are a few things that Nite Lite does very well. Since it was written to take advantage of the features of the Nite Lite interface, it handles inter-port communications very well. The chat room feature is one of the most often used features on my board. It also has a Linked Chat feature, which allows me to call another bbs using Nite Lite software and link my chat room into theirs, allowing more callers to chat together. On several occasions, I used PC Pursuit to connect with a board in Washington DC, and this was a huge success.

There is another feature that has proven popular, but was not supported very well by the software. The author wrote in the ability to call out on one of the unused lines, so you would not have to take down your BBS if you wanted to use it for calling out. It even allowed the sysop to call in from a distant location, and then call out on another line.

Well, I saw some interesting applications for this feature. I live in Flint, which is in the center of Genesee County, and surrounded by many smaller townships. It is a local call from my home to nearly all of the county, but is would be a long distance call for one township to call another. So, I decided to set up my bbs to act as a "gateway," which would allow my users to call all over the county without having to pay any long distance charges. But since this was not the original intent of the author's use of this feature, it creates a lot of difficult problems for the user. They must make several tricky command entries, and if they make one mistake, they could lock up the bbs. Several conversations with the author of this program has done nothing to fix this problem, which could be a major feature and selling point of his software.

OK, as for the other features, let's take a look at each one and compare them to other systems. Nite Lite only supports one download protocol, X-modem. And this is not even the CRC version, but the older version. Now, this is not a critical problem, since nearly all terminal programs support Xmodem. However, in this day of powerful software packages you would expect something more high-tech!

The software allows for several SIG areas to store the downloads in. When you choose the category you are shown a list of the programs available. The name you are shown is *exactly* what was entered by the uploader. This was a good idea because many systems do not use the same filespec names that Atari uses. Atari limits it's names to 12 characters, while others like Apple allow more. Also, some systems use the space character, or other characters. It is important to preserve the correct file names because some programs were written to look for other files, and the names must be exact. However, this creates a headache for the SysOp. The file names are changed when they are uploaded, and the sysop must constantly refer to his data files to find the filename of the program if he wants to delete or transfer it. I personally do not care to have file names messed with in this manner, which is a common feature of Forum ST.

Another feature of the Nite Lite BBS is the ability to store a number of download request into a file, sort of like batch downloading. However, you must keep track of the file names and set up your own terminal program after each files is received. This makes it very handy if you know how to use Flash's DO commands, or some other macro. But it's a real headache for those who do not. The reason for this feature is the author plans to incorporate his own version of a batch download protocol, which will allow for background downloading. But so far, there is no indication when this feature will be implemented into the program.

The message base features are also very poor compared to other ST BBS programs. It works much like Express, but only allows messages up to 2k long. This is not a problem with most messages, but can become inconvenient. There is no message thread commands, other than a "WHAT?" command that will read the previous message in a string. For Forum or BBST users, this will be a sadly missed feature. One other problem I have had is disappearing messages. It appears that the program keeps the message index in memory and must be saved periodically onto disk. If the BBS were to crash before you saved the message index you could lose messages.

How user friendly is Nite Lite? That depends on the sysop. The Nite Lite BBS has a built-in interpreter language that allows the sysop to create his own custom menus, games, utilities, surveys, or anything else he can think of. Many of the nice "touches" were added such as a hot-key feature. You can make a choice, and the menu will abort, and begin showing whatever you chose. This saves the user some on-line time by not having to constantly read long menu pages to the end.

Scanner Wars
ST-Pictascan vs. IMG Scan

by LeRoy Valley (TAG)

	ST-Pictascan	IMG Scan
Price:	$149.95	$99.95
	E. Arthur Brown	Seymor-Radix
	(612) 762-8847	(214) 255-7490
Software:	v1.0	v1.82

Scanners have been around in the computing world for some time. These slick little devices are used to digitize a picture, and then transfer that information to your computer. Once in the computer, you can use the scanned image in your favorite desktop publisher, or in any graphics program!

Why a scanner instead of a video digitizer? You get better resolution (up to 1000 dpi!), and the investment (and equipment required) is considerably less. All that is required for either of the scanners mentioned above is a 520 ST, a printer, and the scanner itself!

There are currently two low-cost scanners for the ST, and I've had the opportunity to play with them for the past month. I've had a lot of fun, and spent a LOT of time scanning, and have become very familiar with both units. I'll compare them in four separate areas (Hardware, Software, Documentation, and actual scan ability) and then sum it all up at the end. (No fair peeking!)

Hardware

The ST-Pictascan unit looks very professional as you pull it from its wrapping. It is enclosed in a black metal housing, and looks very sturdy. The entire unit mounts on your print head, and E. Arthur Brown provides you with several types of brackets designed to handle just about any style of printer. In most cases you'll probably have to remove your ribbon to attach ST-Pictascan.

Unfortunately, a Star NX-1000 printer isn't "just about any style of printer," so I had to design my own bracket. The actual scanning head must rest against the paper on the platen. Given this criteria, and the shape of the ST-Pictascan unit, I have to keep my paper bailer in the up position while I'm scanning. If you're not careful and ST-Pictascan goes too far over (and slips off the end of the paper), it'll catch the paper on the return trip!

Once mounted, ST-Pictascan connects to your ST via the joystick port leaving the cartridge port free for other goodies. The only thing left to do before scanning is to adjust the scanner's sensitivity. (So it knows what's light and dark.) This is done by turning a small potentiometer located at the rear of the unit. To get through the small hole in the case to the potentiometer requires a jewelers screwdriver. (I really think that they should include a small tool for this.)

ST-Pictascan also has another potentiometer which is for adjusting their stipple effect. The manual doesn't explain what this "stipple effect" is, but according to Eben Brown, it is used to determine the amount of shading ST-Pictascan will apply to the image being scanned.

The IMG Scan unit, on the other hand, looks very simple. It consists of a small cartridge (I can't use other cartridges ...sigh) and two fiber optic cables which attach to the cartridge. Mounting IMG Scan consists of taping (Yes, I'm serious - taping!) one end of the fiber optic cables to your print head, making sure that the ends are within 1/16" of the paper. There is no need to remove your printer ribbon, and your paper bail can stay down. Since IMG Scan doesn't actually touch the paper, there's no danger of it catching the paper. There are no adjustments to make on the IMG Scan scanner.

Software

Booting up the ST-Pictascan software. we are greeted with the screen shown in Figure 1. The first line, Lines to Scan, is the number of vertical lines we want to scan. If the printer were set set up with 1/72" line feeds, then a 72 here would scan 1" of our image. Samples per line determines how much of the image we want to scan horizontally. ST-Pictascan always scans at maximum resolution. The actual number of samples taken during one horizontal pass is dependant on the speed of your printer. A 160 cps printer will scan at 412 dpi -- a 100 cps printer will scan at 660 dpi! If your printer collects 4000 samples per 8" of travel, then setting this parameter to 2000 would scan only half of the page (4"). Since scanning is a slow process,

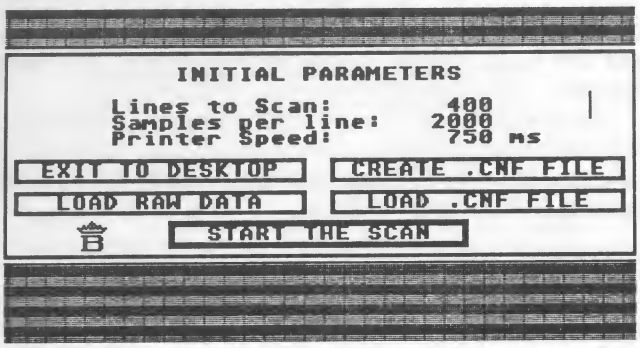

Figure One

you don't want to scan any more than you have to. Printer Speed is the amount of time that the printer takes to move to the right side of the image. This setting is very critical, because if it's not set high enough, then the printer and the software get out of sync with each other, and the result is a VERY distorted image.

The first selection we would make (prior to scanning) is CREATE .CNF FILE. Clicking on this box gives us another GEM dialog box in which we can set up the printer, and then save these settings for future use. E. Arthur Brown supplies you with several different .CNF files for Epson compatible printers. Once the printer is set up, simply select START THE SCAN, and you're in business! While the unit is scanning, you'll see a representation of what it's scanning on the screen. If you need to adjust the unit during the scan, simply press "p" during a right move, and the scanner will pause. Since the software provides you with no means of adjusting things like sensitivity or shading, you've got to manually adjust the scanner via the potentiometers. A dialog box lets you continue the scan at this point or abort.

When the scanner is done, you'll be presented with another dialog box (see Figure 2). At this point the software allows you to manipulate the RAW image, and this is where ST-Pictascan really shines! SET AREA allows you to define an area in which to redraw the entire image! Using this you can stretch, squash, and distort the image to your heart's content. By enclosing an area with a GEM rubberband box you can magnify it as much as you want -- after it's already scanned! The ability to define the area of the scan to save is a real benefit.

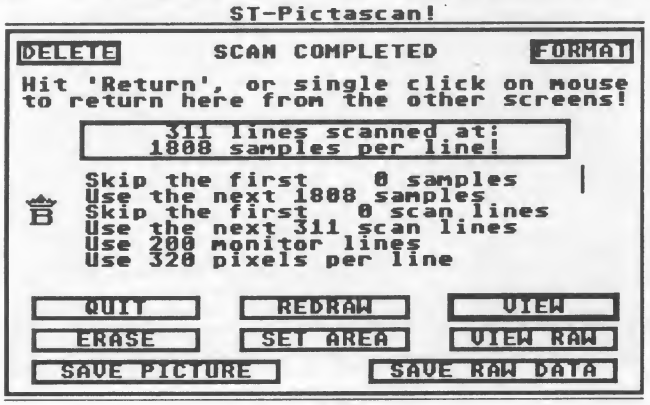

Figure Two

VIEW allows you to look at the screen defined with the SET AREA command, while VIEW RAW allows you to look at the original scanned image. Several other options which can be set from this dialog box include Skip the first xx samples (to cut off data from the left side of the scan), Use the next xx samples (to define the width of the scanned image to use), Skip the first xx scan lines (to cut off data from the top of the image), and Use the next xx scan lines (to define how much of the scanned image to use). After you're done playing with the image, you can either save it as a standard Degas picture or as raw data. The raw data can be used by the software in all three resolutions. Saving it as raw data allows you to manipulate it at a later date. Files saved in their raw state can be as large as 650K, and can only be used with the ST-Pictascan software.

Booting up the IMG Scan software, we get the screen shown in Figure 3. The small box under the ruler to the left of the ENLARGE/REDUCE buttons is used to determine what portion of the picture to scan. The box can be dragged back and forth with the mouse, thus allowing you to center a picture, or scan a specific portion of it. Clicking on different buttons in the ENLARGE/REDUCE scale will cause this box to get smaller and larger, depicting the magnification at which to scan.

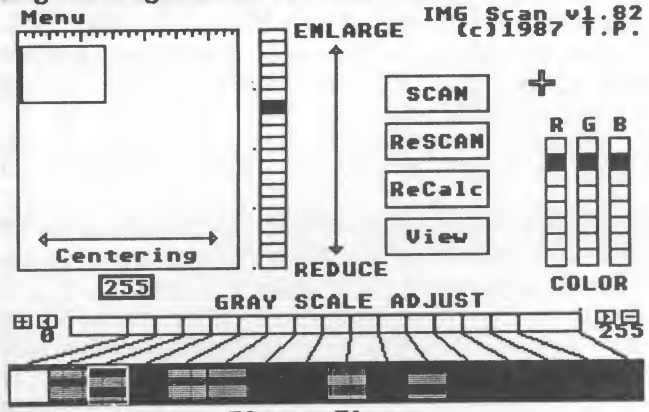

Figure Three

Selecting Menu will give us the drop-down menu shown in Figure 4. To set up the scanner all we have to do is adjust the image in the printer so that the scanner cable will pass over an area that has a good average of black and white and then select Auto Gray Adj.. The print head will feed across the image once and the software will calculate the gray scale automatically! Looking at the bottom of the screen, you'll see the gray scale adjust slider. At any point during the scan you can pause the scanner and adjust the gray scale! By clicking on the small arrows at either end of the slider you can make the image lighter or darker. Clicking on the + or - will either expand or compress the gray scale.

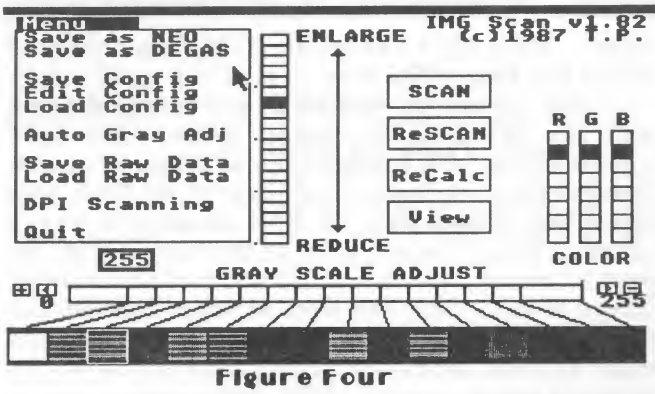

Figure Four

You can even individually adjust ONE shade on the gray scale simply by clicking on the line for that shade in the slider and dragging it where you want! After you've got it set the way you want, just click on Recalc, and IMG Scan will recalculate what you've already scanned, and adjusting it to the new settings! This type of control is fantastic, and very, VERY easy to use!

SCAN simply starts the scanning process (or continues it), while RESCAN clears what you've already scanned and starts over. Using SCAN, you can scan different parts of your image at different magnifications, and have them all appear on the same screen! VIEW allows you to look at the image that's been scanned. Moving back to the menu, we can save our picture as either Neo-Chrome or Degas format (at whatever resolution you're currently in), or as a Raw data file. Once again, the raw data file can be loaded and used in any resolution, and you can manipulate the image via the gray scale slider.

The Save Config, Edit Config, and Load Config options all pertain to setting up your printer. If you've got an Epson compatible printer, you won't even need to use these. If you don't, Seymor Radix provides you with 8 others (including Citizen, Gemini 10X, and Seikosha) and the ability to create your own configuration. Once you've set up your printer, you can save the configuration and never worry about it again.

DPI Scanning is the option that really makes the IMG Scanner an incredible performer. This lets you scan your image at 75, 150, 216, 300, 360, or 1000dpi! And best of all, the image is saved as a standard .IMG file!! This means that any program that supports .IMG files (like Easy Draw, Publishing Partner Professional, or Word Up) can print out these images at the maximum resolution of the printing device! Using it is as simple as selecting DPI Scanning, then scanning as you normally would. Pictures scanned at 300 dpi look incredible, and print just as incredibly!

The last option on the DPI Scanning menu, More Options, presents you with a menu containing standard disk operations such as formatting disks and deleting and renaming files. But what are those over there on the right hand side? RGB sliders? Yes, IMG Scan also allows you to scan images in color! Simply click on the shade, then set the RGB sliders to the desired color. It's that simple!

Seymor Radix offers FREE software updates to all IMG Scan owners. Simply send in a disk and a stamped and self addressed envelope for the latest update! (Or look on GEnie.)

Documentation

Both manuals are about equal in the information provided (about 30 pages). They both guide the user through a tutorial, and then give you a reference section with a short description for each feature (well, almost). E. Arthur Brown never mentions exactly what it is that the Stipple effect does, and Seymor Radix doesn't explain how to use the DPI Scanning option very well (to be fair, though, the DPI Scanning option is very new, and I did push to get the new version of software in time for this review). Seymor Radix even provides you with a picture of King Tut to practice on!

Scanning

The IMG Scan unit consistently provided me with better scans than the ST-Pictascan. Figure 5 was scanned using the IMG Scanner after I had only played with it for 15 minutes! Figure 6 was scanned by Eben Brown himself. I couldn't get results that were as good as his using my ST-Pictascan (and I used it for two straight weeks, and had discussions with Mr. Brown on three separate occasions!), and I really wanted to show you the best possible pictures from both units.

Of course, the real test of a scanner is how well the picture prints out, not how well it looks on the screen. When using IMG Scan in normal scan mode, the printouts look about the same as those from ST-Pictascan. But when IMG Scan is used in DPI mode, there is no comparison. IMG Scan brings out far more details and shades than ST-Pictascan. Using an HP Deskjet printer (not mine, a friend's...sigh), the difference becomes very obvious.

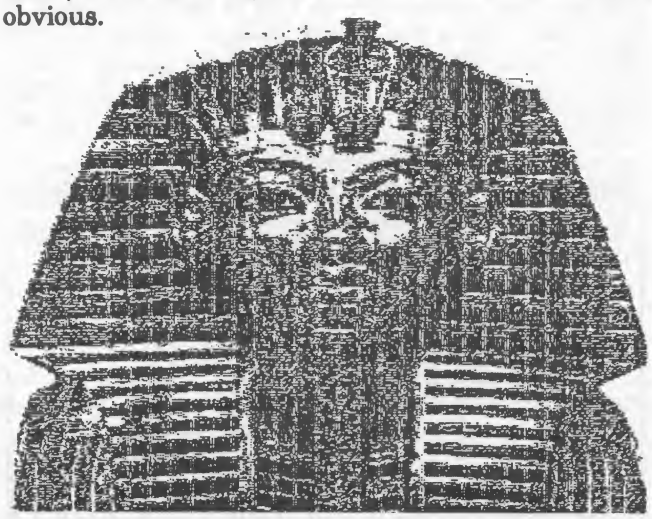

Figure Five

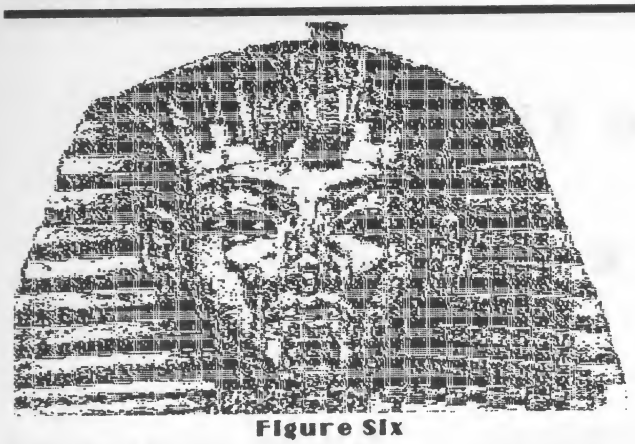

Figure Six

Summary

Hardware-wise, the ST-Pictascan looks more impressive. However, I've heard it said that you can't judge a book by it's cover. and this saying applies very well in this case. The design of the ST-Pictascan makes it cumbersome to attach to your printer, and I don't like the sound of my printer when the scanning unit catches on the paper during a return trip. (I know it's my fault for not setting up my right and left moves every time, but it IS going to happen sooner or later if you use different size images.) In contrast, IMG Scan could not be easier to attach to your print head, and there's no danger of catching on the paper. The earlier models of IMG Scan didn't even have a nice case for the cartridge. You simply plugged a bare board into your cartridge port! Seymor Radix has rectified that, and for only $9.95 you can get a case and the latest software.

In the software department, IMG Scan again gets the nod. Their software is completely GEM based and all adjustments to the scanner or the scanned imaged can be made with a simple click of the mouse! Features like Auto Gray Scale adjust, and the ability to add color to a scanned image are fantastic. And, with the ability to scan an image in standard GEM .IMG format, you've got the perfect tool for creating stunning clip art! Best of all, if I change the sensitivity of the IMG Scanner, I can change what I've already scanned! With ST-Pictascan, once I've found the proper sensitivity and stipple adjustment, I've got to rescan the image! On the plus side, ST-Pictascan does have superb manipulative powers over the image after the scan. This is the only feature sorely lacking in the IMG Scan software. Seymor Radix informs me that a future release of their software will give users the ability to manipulate the scanned image (similar to ST-Pictascan).

The real clincher however, is the fact that I consistently got better scans with IMG Scan than with ST-Pictascan. Couple this fact with price of the two units ($99.95 for IMG Scan vs. $149.95 for ST-Pictascan) and your choice becomes obvious.

Well, that's it for this month. I'd really like to hear some comments on my articles. You can E-Mail me at L.VALLEY on GEnie. Let me know what you'd like to see in the coming months!

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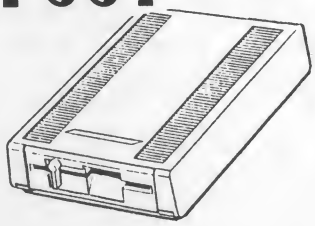
Impressions of the XF551

8Bit Atari Drive



by Brent Fisher (CACE)

All right everyone, hold on to your hats. I'm finally going to do it. That's right I'm going to write a review. Down to business, my review will cover the new disk drive from Atari for the 8bit, the XF551. I'll start with the good points and then go to the bad ones.

First off, the drive matches the XE line to a tee. Cosmetically, it couldn't look any better and still be a disk drive. This drive is truly double-sided and also double-density. All this means is you can store four times as much information as you can with a normal single-sided single-density disk such as you would if you formatted a disk with option P from the DOS 2.5 menu.

One extremely nice feature is this disk drive is quiet. Those of you who own an 810 or a 1050 will wonder if the drive is working or not if you have the volume turned down on your monitor or tv set. This drive is also reliable, I used it to run demonstrations at the mall all weekend and never once did it give me any trouble.

For those of you who like to know what's inside, all I can say is not much. Compared with the 1050 or 810, this drive is very clean. In fact there are only two plugs that connect the drive mechanism to the guts. I have heard you can take a standard three and a half-inch drive mechanism and hook it to the guts, and you'll have a nice three and a half inch disk drive.

All right, these are the things I don't like so far. First, Atari didn't put a power indicator light on the front of the disk drive, in fact there isn't one on it at all. The only way that you can tell if it's on or not is to go around the back of the drive and see which way the power switch is indicating. [Editors' Note: see the following hardware modification article on putting a LED indicator on your XF551!] Which brings up the next bad point. Atari stuck the power switch in the back of the drive. Of course, this isn't so bad for those of you who are used to reaching around to find the power switch but for those of us who haven't, it does take getting used to.

Time to disspell all those nasty rumors about incompatibility with software. First, let me say I couldn't get the drive to work with any legitimate copy of Flight Simulator II, though I suspect this arises from the software protection scheme subLOGIC used. But for those of you who are worrying the Print Shop won't work, don't give it a second thought. This drive will read the back side of the disk perfectly fine, it just won't write to it, that is unless you first put a notch in the side like so many of you have done in the past so you could use the back side of your disk in your 1050s.

Another thing, this drive will not format the back side of the disk as you would normally expect it to as the 1050 does once you punch the write protect hole out.

To format the back side of your disk, you need to punch a hole exactly opposite of it on the left side on both sides of the disk jacket. Now before you all get up in arms about this being a worthless drive since you have to do all this work on a double-side drive, the above is just for those of you who want to use this drive like a 1050.

To get the full potential out of this drive you need use either SpartaDOS or MyDOS, both of which handle the drive as it was meant to be in true double-sided fashion.

I have had no problems writing to disks I already punched the write protect hole out of. But as mentioned above, don't try a format until you stick in a second timing hole.

This drive has a lot of potential which I hope software vendors will sit up and take advantage of.

The only other things about this drive that bugs me are not the fault of the drive but rather Atari itself. So far Atari hasn't released their long awaited replacement for DOS 2.5, A-DOS, but in the meantime you can still use the drive if you use SpartaDOS or MyDOS.

If you are confused enough yet, you can give me a call at 764-4599 and I'll try to explain it better or just come to the meeting September 11 and I'll give a demonstration there.

One final thing. If you are looking for another disk drive or even your first disk drive, this is the drive to go to.

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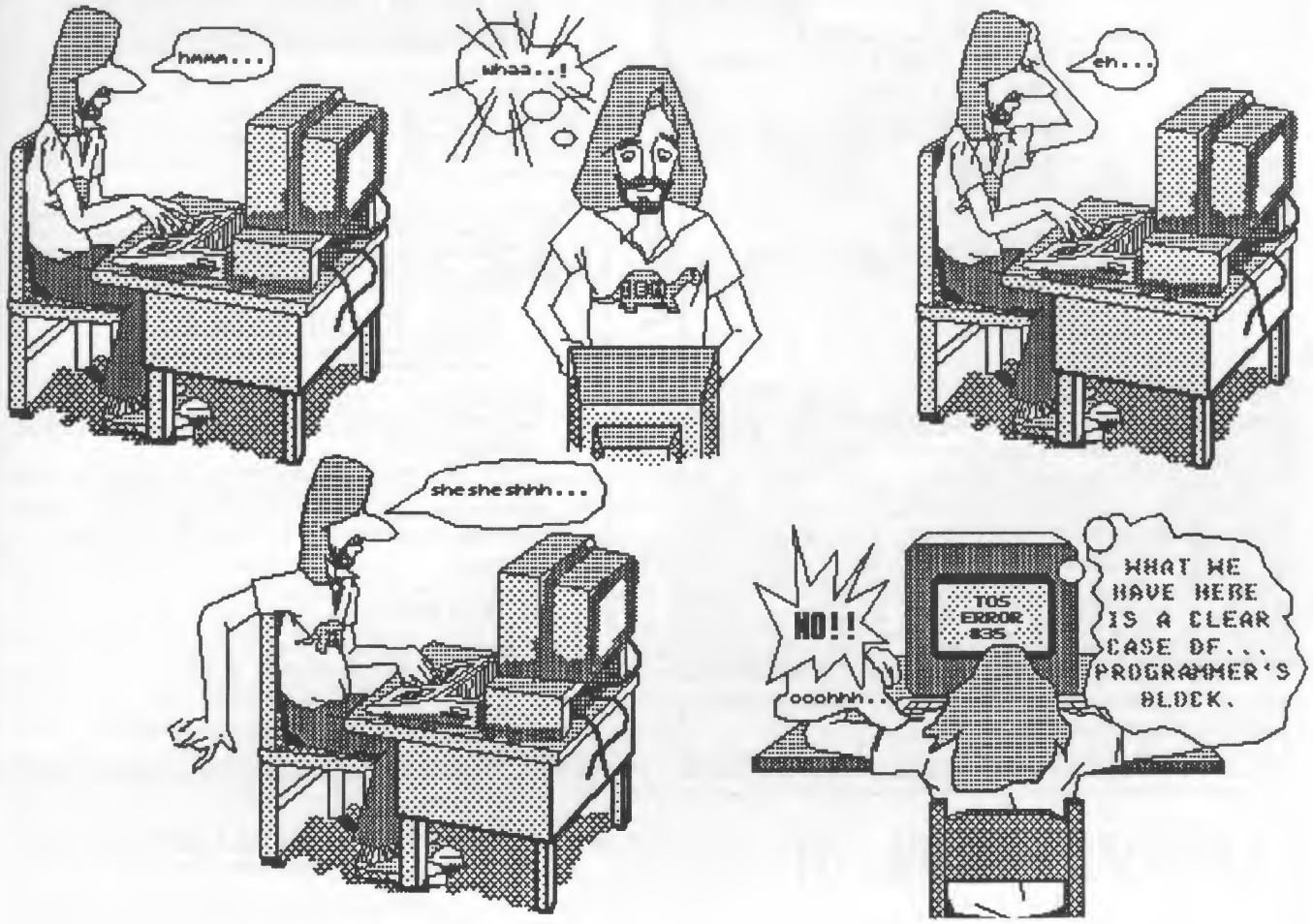

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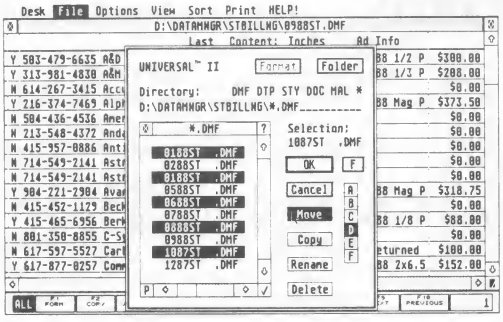

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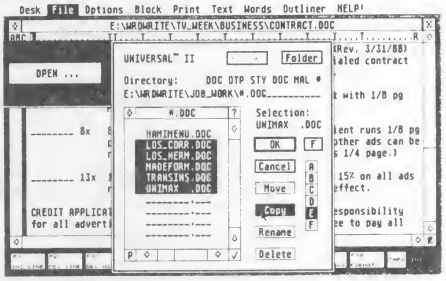

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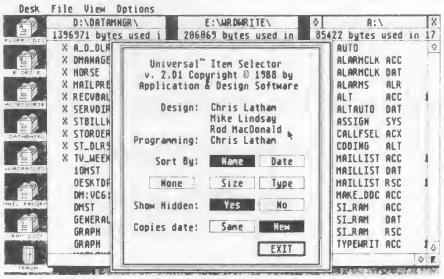

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XF551 Disk Drive

Power LED Modification

by David Bryant (GKAUG)

Several Atari users have already seen the new XF551 disk drive. and enjoy the double density, double sided features. It seems that one feature was left out. The new XF551 does not have a Power LED to let you know the drive is on. If your drive reacts like mine, the disk access LED lights when you turn the drive on and off. This project will resolve that oversight by installing a power LED in the front panel, below the disk access led.

Warning: this modification requires that you remove the covers and modify the front panel, so it will void any warranty from Atari Corporation.

Parts Needed

1 - RED LED, Radio Shack #276-018.
1 - 100 OHM RESISTOR, RS #271-1311.
1 - LED Holders, RS #276-079.
2 - 14 inches, 24 Gage Wire.

Instructions

1: Turn the drive over and remove the four phillips screws that secure the top. Now remove the top.

2: Locate the power cable (it has four wires and is keyed) that plugs into the rear of the drive, and unplug it.

3: Also locate the data ribbon cable (it is also keyed) and unplug it.

4: Use a pencil and draw a line on the bottom case below the disk access led.

5: Remove the phillips screws holding the disk drive mounting brackets to the bottom case; lift the drive assembly from the bottom case and set it aside.

6: Use care and drill a 1/4" hole in the vertical edge, of the bottom case, where you drew the line in step #4. (See diagram #1)

7: Insert one Led Holder in the hole.

8: Locate the jumper wire marked "V" on the front edge of the interface printed circuit board. (See diagram #2) Solder one of the 14 inch wires to it. Solder the other end of this wire to the ANODE end (long leg) of the LED.

9: Locate the jumper wire marked "G" on the front edge of the interface printed circuit board and solder one leg of the resistor to it (See diagram #2). Solder one of the 14 inch wires to the other leg of the resistor. Press the resistor flat against the PCB. Solder the other end of this wire to the CATHODE end (short leg) of the LED.

10: Insert the LED into the led holder and press the legs flat against the bottom case. Route the wires along the left edge, between the drive supports.

11: Plug in the power cable to the back of the disk drive and turn on the power switch. The power led should light. If not, then check your wiring or the polarity of the led.

12: If all works well, then remove power and re-attach the Drive to the bottom case. Attach the two cables removed in steps #2 and #3. Now install the top case to the bottom case.

13: Apply power and check again for proper operation.

David Bryant is a devoted Atari 8bit user, GKAUG's treasurer, and may be contacted at the club's BBS (616-657-2665).

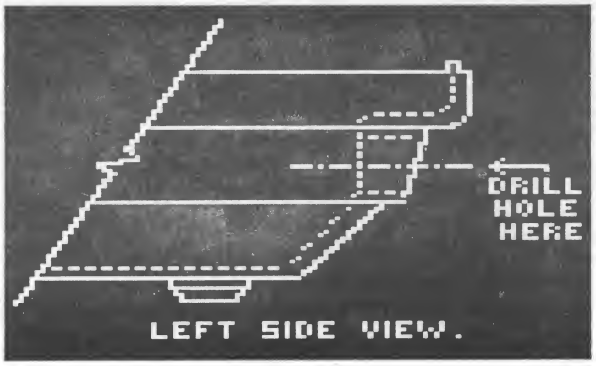

Figure One

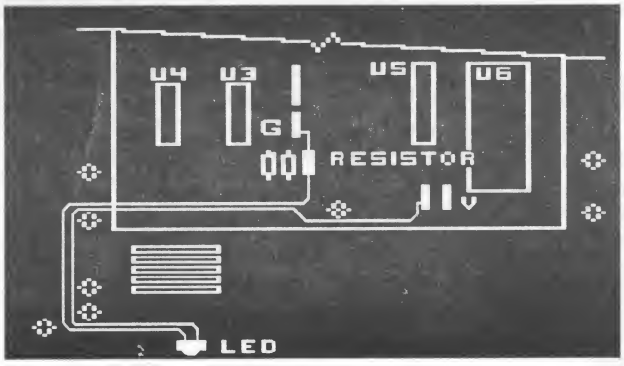

Figure Two

Hey, I've Been on Vacation!

(So, What Do You Expect?)

by Gordon Totty (MACE)

Maybe a better title would have been, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," but I think you get the point either way. If not, the point is you might want to skip this one and read something better, like "How to Connect Your Microwave Oven to Your MIDI Port." Come to think of it, that article is probably being held for the very special Christmas issue.

First, some personal notes.

"GOTCHA!!"

That's my only apology to those of you who were taken in by my Letter to the Editor and my own reply on the subject of the Strop Piker or Strap Puker review. Gosh folks, I never dreamed anyone would believe the stupid letter was anything other than a gag! Then, believing you would figure the letter for a joke, I thought surely you would conclude that the answer to it was also just humor.

OK, ok, I will apologize. To Bill and Pattie, our beloved editors, I beg your pardon. I especially feel bad that there are a few people who could believe that either of you could be capable of really being sarcastic to a reader. So, let me introduce us to those who don't know us yet. I'm the snide, mean little twerp. Bill and Pattie are kind and nice or kind of nice, or something like that. To the readers, I am sorry if I did not make the humor more obvious. I let you down, and if you can't forgive me then read no further. I don't deserve you.

I must admit, however, that I never had so much fun writing a piece as that bogus Letter to the Editor, and its response. Apologies aside, I confess that I am still giggling over it (the piece, not the reaction).

Let's get serious. While on vacation, I noticed a very bad bit of news in The Wall Street Journal. In case you haven't heard, Atari is claiming it was cheated in the Federated store purchase, and has filed a lawsuit for damages in the amount of $43 million. Considering that Atari paid $67.3 million for the stores, the suit in effect requests that about two-thirds of the purchase price be refunded.

Why? Alleged fraud, consisting of providing Atari with financial statements and reports overstating the value of Federated. Atari charges the defendants knew that the statements were not accurate. Atari is seeking triple damages under the Federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. I'll bet that got the defendants' attention! Collecting the treble damages, a mere $129 million, requires proof of a "pattern of racketeering."

I know very little about this case, but my "man in the street" opinion is they will have a very hard time proving a pattern of racketeering on the part of Federated's former CEO, auditors, and investment banker. So, let's not count on Atari getting the full amount and investing it in better products, better US distribution, more software support, etc.

It seems Federated is doing so poorly it is dragging Atari's earnings down (59 percent below year ago for the first half of '88). This, in turn, my fellow investors, may account for the fairly recent drop in the price of Atari stock by about 20 percent to 25 percent.

Now, for some more bad news on a new subject. We have all heard how well Atari is doing overseas. So I ask you, what is the largest selling home computer in Germany? According to COMPUTE!, it is the Commodore. Damn things are like cockroaches, aren't they? You just cannot wipe them out. Do you think we should have bought one? Naaahh! You know, one of these decades they are going to stop bringing out new software for it. Besides, the disk drive is too slow.

Back to my vacation, up in New England I read about the Computer Museum in Boston. I wish I could tell you all about my visit to it, but I did not get near it. Actually, the article I saw in the Boston Globe was about (sweet?) Adeline Naiman, who was just appointed education director of the museum. In speaking of the computer revolution, she said nothing except the automobile has made such a qualitative difference in the lives of people. (One amazing example is discussed below.) What do you think? Your thousand word essay is due to MAM next month. Please get started now.

Ms. Naiman has a lot of ideas for helping the museum bridge the gap between the techies

(you) and the lay public (me). If only half of her ideas get implemented the Boston Computer Museum should be an exciting place to visit.

Come to think of it, it probably already is an exciting place to visit. It is the only museum exclusively devoted to computers. It gets 100,000 visitors each year, so it would not likely be crowded on any particular day. They come to see hardware, software, historical computers and robots -- a collection of 1,350 artifacts, 1,000 photographs, 200 videotapes, and 40 films. Mind you, I have not been there and cannot speculate how much of this is on display at any time. Many museums are like icebergs; there is more to them than you can see.

If you get up that way, stop by. It will cost you $4.50 per adult, according to the flyer I picked up from a travel rack. If you have already been there, why not write up a description for MAM? (Don't you like the title of our journal? Reminds me of a polite youngster addressing a mature lady.)

Moving on to another subject and another computer, how many of you became charter subscribers to PC/Computing? Because of the brand of computer I use at the office (Brand X if you must know), I have tried several of the magazines that cater to the computers that use PC-DOS or MS-DOS. I am not going to name the ones I did not like, but I want to relate that while on vacation, I read the first issue of PC/Computing from cover to cover. If you are interested in this kind of magazine, in addition to MAM and three or four Atari related magazines, I urge you to try PC/Computing.

I rate it "fantastic" on a scale from "Save it for the out-house" to "Not tonight, honey; I'm going to read a magazine!" ("Fantastic" is just below the top of the scale. I don't give the top rating to many publications.) It is published by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. I mention that so you can be sure to pick up the right magazine. Many of these magazines have very similar titles, owing to the limited number of ways you can say "PC."

Back to the subject of Atari magazines for a moment, do you notice, as I do, that there seem to be more Atari magazines, relatively, than Atari computers? Are we better at buying magazines than other computer owners? There are far more Apple computers in use than Atari, yet I think there are twice as many Atari magazines as Apple. Or, does it just seem that way as I go broke buying magazines at about $4 each? Fortunately, I save money by not buying any more Apple magazines. I did buy one, just once. Didn't like it.

PC/Computing has a $2.95 cover price but 12 monthly issues can be yours for $12.95 a year, including a free disk of utilities for 'ol blue. The first issue was 272 pages, not uncommon in the PC magazine field. See how important advertisers are to keeping the price of the magazine down?

So far, PC/Computing has cost me double the subscription price, as an article in it caused me to go out and buy a book. The article is about Stephen Hawking, a 46-year-old British physicist who is a genius. Mr. Hawking has had Lou Gehrig's disease for about 25 years and has been confined to a wheelchair for the past twenty years. Several years ago, he lost his voice after catching pneumonia. After that, his wheelchair was equipped with a special computer and voice synthesizer to permit him to "talk." One of his ambitions is to show that disabled people can achieve success with the right help and equipment.

Hawking's publisher (Bantam Books) points out he was born on the anniversary of Galileo's death. (What would Shirley MacLaine make of that?) He holds Newton's chair as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University. His publisher claims he "is widely regarded as the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein." Hawking calls this "media hype. I'm a bit smarter than most, but not exceptional." (Newton's chair at Cambridge! Sure, MAM, the kid's a little brighter than average...but he's no Einstein!)

The book is titled "A Brief History of Time, From the Big Bang to Black Holes." The last time I looked, it was on the New York Times' best seller list. I have not read it yet, but understand that it includes only one equation. In it you will learn that black holes have no hair. (Don't ask me; I haven't figured that out yet.) With careful reading, I hope to profit from this book, but I did not buy it soley for that reason. I am sure Stephen Hawking would not like to read this, but I bought the book because the PC/Computing interview put a lump in my throat. I had to buy the book, to read what it is that this man works so hard to communicate. My emotion is not pity. It is awe. Awe of the technology and the man.

The PC/Computing article was written by Charles Fox, also confined to a wheelchair. Even if this magazine is not for you, try to look it up at the library and read the piece about Hawking. It was written for people interested in computers, and describes an amazing computer application.

The only other news I have from my summer vacation has to do with my "hacking" as a writer. Immodesty forces me to reveal to you that, if all goes well, you should soon be able to read some of my stuff in ST X-PRESS. They have NOT gone out of business, but, like Analog have been off the market for a few months and expect to return "bigger and better." Perhaps it will have happened by the time you read this. Wish me well, I know I do!

Aw, c'mon. I'm just kidding. My ego is very, very tiny. Almost.

I wonder if ST X-PRESS would have canned me for the Strip Poker prank. One thing that will keep me writing for MAM is that my MAM has forgiven me. Thank you, MAM, my little MAM-my! How corny do you think I can get?

[Editors' Note: Very, Gordon, very!]

Blocking of Long-Distance Telephone Calls

by Jim Schmickley, Hawkeye PC

Summary: This article describes the "blocking" by one long-distance telephone company of access through its system to certain telephone numbers, particularly BBS numbers. The blocking is applied in a very arbitrary manner, and the company arrogantly asserts BBS SysOps and anyone who uses a computer modem are "hackers."

The company doesn't really want to discuss the situation, but it appears the following scenario occurred. The proverbial "person or persons unknown" identified one or more "valid" long-distance account numbers, and subsequently used those numbers on one or more occasions to fraudulently call a legitimate computer bulletin board system (BBS). When the long-distance company discovered the fraudulent charges, they "blocked" the line without bothering to investigate or contacting the BBS SysOp to obtain his assistance. In fact, the company did not even determine the SysOp's name.

The long-distance carrier would like to pretend that the incident which triggered the actions described in this article was an isolated situation, not related to anything else in the world. However, there are major principles of free, uninhibited communications and individual rights deeply interwoven into the issue. And there is still the lingering question, "If one long-distance company is interfering with its customers' communications on little more than a whim, are other long-distant companies also interfering with the American public's right of free 'electronic speech?"

Call to Action

Your inputs and protests are needed to counter the long-distance company's claims that "no one was hurt by their blocking actions because nobody complained." Obviously nobody complained for a long time because the line blocking was carried out in such a manner no one realized, until April 1988, what was being done.

Please read through the rest of this article (yes, it's long, but you should find it very interesting) and judge for yourself. Then, please write to the organizations listed at the end of the article; insist your right to telephone whatever number you choose should not be impaired by the arbitrary decision of some telephone company bureaucrat who really doesn't care about the rights of his customers. Protest in the strongest terms. Remember, the rights you save will be your own!

Setting the Scene

Teleconnect is a long-distance carrier and telephone direct marketing company headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The company is about eight-years-old, and has a long-distance business base of about 200,000 customers. Teleconnect has just completed its first public stock offering, and is presently (August 1988) involved in a merger which will make it the nation's fourth-largest long-distance carrier. It is a very rapidly-growing company, having achieved its spectacular growth by offering long-distance service at rates advertised as being 15 percent to 30 percent below AT&T's rates.

When Teleconnect started out in the telephone interconnection business, few, if any, exchanges were set up for "equal access", so it set up a network of local access numbers (essentially just unlisted local PABXs - private automatic branch exchanges) and assigned a six-digit account number to each customer. Later, a seventh "security" digit was added to all account numbers. (I know what you're thinking - what could be easier for a war-games dialer than to seek out "valid" seven-digit numbers?) Teleconnect now offers direct "equal access" dialing on most exchanges. But, the older access number/account code system is still in place for those exchanges which do not offer "equal access." And, that system is still very useful for customers who place calls from their offices or other locations away from home.

In April 1988, a friend mentioned that Teleconnect was "blocking" certain telephone lines where they detected computer tone. In particular, he had been unable to call Curt Kyhl's Stock Exchange BBS in Waterloo, Iowa.This sounded like something I should certainly look into, so I tried to call Curt's BBS. Teleconnect would not allow my call to go through. Instead, I got a recorded voice message stating the call was a local call from my location. A second attempt got the same message. At least they were consistent.

I called my Teleconnect service representative and asked just what the problem was. After I explained what happened, she suggested that it must be a local call. I explained I really didn't think a 70-mile call from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo was a local call. She checked on the situation and informed me the line was being "blocked." I asked why, and she "supposed it was at the customer's request." After being advised that statement made no sense, she admitted she really didn't know why. So, on to her supervisor. The first-level supervisor verified the line was being "blocked by Teleconnect security," but she couldn't or wouldn't say why. Then she challenged, "Why do you want to call that number?" That was the wrong question to ask this unhappy customer, and the lady quickly discovered that was none of her business. On to her supervisor.

The second-level supervisor refused to reveal any information of value to a mere customer, but she did suggest any line Teleconnect was blocking could still be reached through AT&T or Northwestern Bell by dialing 10288-1. When questioned why Teleconnect, which for years had sold its service on the basis of a cost-savings over AT&T rates, was now suggesting that customers use AT&T, the lady had no answer.

I was then informed that, if I needed more information, I should

contact Dan Rogers, Teleconnect's Vice President for Customer Service. That sounded good; "Please connect me."

"I'm sorry, but Mr. Rogers is out of town, and won't be back until next week."

"Next week?"

"But he does call in regularly. Maybe he could call you back before that."

Mr. Rogers did call me back, later that day, from Washington, D.C. where he and some Teleconnect "security people" were attending a conference on telephone security. Dan Rogers prefaced his conversation with, "I'm just the mouthpiece; I don't understand all the technical details. But, our security people are blocking that number because we've had some problems with it in the past." I protested the allegation of "problems" didn't make sense because the number was for a computer bulletin board system operated by a reputable businessman, Curt Kyhl.

Mr. Rogers said I had just given Teleconnect new information; they had not been able to determine whose number they were blocking. "Our people are good, but they're not that good. Northwestern Bell won't release subscriber information to us." And, when he got back to his office the following Monday, he would have the security people check to see if the block could be removed.

The following Monday, another woman from Teleconnect called to inform me they had checked the line, and they were removing the block from it. She added the comment this was the first time in four years that anyone had requested a line be unblocked. I suggested that it probably wouldn't be the last time.

In a later telephone conversation, Dan Rogers verified the block had been removed from Curt Kyhl's line, but warned the line would be blocked again "if there were any more problems with it." A brief, nonconclusive discussion of Teleconnect's right to take such action then ensued. I added the fact that Teleconnect "security" had been unable to determine the identity of the SysOp of the blocked board just didn't make sense; it didn't sound as if the "security people" were very competent. Mr. Rogers then admitted every time the security people tried to call the number, they got a busy signal (and, although Mr. Rogers didn't admit it, they just "gave up," and arbitrarily blocked the line.) Oh, yes, the voice message, "This is a local call..." was not intended to deceive anyone according to Dan Rogers. It was just Teleconnect could only put so many messages on their equipment, and that was the one they selected for blocked lines.

Beginning the Paper Trail

Obviously, Teleconnect was not going to pay much attention to telephone calls from mere customers. On April 22, Ben Blackstock, practicing attorney and veteran SysOp, wrote to Mr. Rogers urging Teleconnect permit their customers to call whatever numbers they desired. Ben questioned Teleconnect's authority to block calls, and suggested such action had serious overlays of "big brother." He also noted "you cannot punish the innocent to get at someone who is apparently causing Teleconnect difficulty."

Casey D. Mahon, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Teleconnect, replied to Ben Blackstock's letter on April 28th. This response was the start of Teleconnect's seemingly endless stream of vague, general allegations regarding "hackers" and "computer billboards." Teleconnect insisted they did have authority to block access to telephone lines, and cited 18 USC 2511(2)(a)(i) as an example of the authority. The Teleconnect position was summed up in the letter:

"Finally, please be advised the company is willing to 'unblock' the line in order to ascertain whether or not illegal hacking has ceased. In the event, however, theft of Teleconnect long distance services through use of the bulletin board resumes, we will certainly block access through the Teleconnect network again and use our authority under federal law to ascertain the identity of the hacker or hackers."

Mr. Blackstock checked the cited section of the US Code, and discovered it related to "interception" of communications, but had nothing to do with blocking. He advised me of his opinion, and wrote back to Casey Mahon challenging her interpretation of that section of federal law.

In his letter, Ben noted, "Either Teleconnect is providing a communication service that is not discriminatory, or it is not." He added he would "become upset, to say the least" if he discovered Teleconnect was blocking access to his BBS. Mr. Blackstock concluded by offering to cooperate with Teleconnect in seeking a declaratory judgment regarding their "right" to block a telephone number based upon the actions of some third party. To date, Teleconnect has not responded to that offer.

On May 13th, I sent my own reply to Casey Mahon, and answered the issues of her letter point by point. I noted that even I, not an attorney, knew the difference between interception and blocking, and if Teleconnect didn't, they could check with any football fan. My letter concluded:

"Since Teleconnect's 'blocking' policies are ill-conceived, thoughtlessly arbitrary, anti-consumer, and of questionable legality, they need to be corrected immediately. Please advise me how Teleconnect is revising these policies to ensure that I and all other legitimate subscribers will have uninhibited access to any and all long-distance numbers we choose to call."

Casey Mahon replied on June 3rd. Not unexpectedly, she brushed aside all my arguments. She also presented the first of the sweeping generalizations, with total avoidance of specifics, which we have since come to recognize as a Teleconnect trademark. One paragraph neatly sums Casey Mahon's letter:

"While I appreciate the time and thought that obviously went into your letter, I do not agree with your conclusion that Teleconnect's efforts to prevent theft of its services are in any way inappropriate. The inter-exchange industry has been plagued, throughout its history, by individuals who devote substantial ingenuity to the theft of long distance services. It is not unheard of for a company to lose as much as $500,000 a month to theft. As you can imagine, such losses, over a period of time, could drive a company out of business."

Escalation

By this time, it was very obvious Teleconnect was going to remain recalcitrant until some third party, preferably a regulatory agency, convinced them of the error of their ways. Accordingly, I assembled the file and added a letter of complaint addressed to the Iowa Utilities Board. The complaint simply asked that Teleconnect be directed to institute appropriate safeguards to ensure "innocent third parties" would no longer be adversely af-

fected by Teleconnect's arbitrary "blocking" policies. My letter of complaint was dated July 7th, and the Iowa Utilities Board replied on July 13th. The reply stated Teleconnect was required to respond to my complaint by August 2nd, and the Board would then propose a resolution. If the proposed resolution was not satisfactory, I could request the file be reopened and the complaint be reconsidered. If the results of that action were not satisfactory, a formal hearing could be requested.

After filing the complaint, I also sent a copy of the file to Congressman Tom Tauke. Mr. Tauke represents the Second Congressional District of Iowa, which includes Cedar Rapids, and is also a member of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee. I have subsequently had a personal conversation with Mr. Tauke as well as additional correspondence on the subject. He seems to have a deep and genuine interest in the issue, but at my request, is simply an interested observer at this time. It is our hope that the Iowa Utilities Board will propose an acceptable resolution without additional help.

Teleconnect's response to the Iowa Utilities Board was filed July 29th. As anticipated, it contained vague generalities and unsubstantiated allegations. However, it offered one item of new, and shocking, information; Curt Kyhl's BBS had been blocked for ten months, from June 6, 1987 to mid-April 1988. (At this point it should be noted that Teleconnect's customers had no idea that the company was blocking some of our calls. We just assumed that calls weren't going through because of Teleconnect's technical problems.)

Teleconnect avoided putting any specific, or even relevant, information in their letter. However, they did offer to whisper in the staff's ear; "Teleconnect would be willing to share detailed information regarding this specific case, and hacking in general, with the Board's staff, as it has in the past with various federal and local law enforcement agencies, including the United States Secret Service. Teleconnect respectfully requests, however, that the board agree to keep such information confidential, as to do otherwise would involve public disclosure of ongoing investigations of criminal conduct and the methods by which interexchange carriers, including Teleconnect, detect such theft."

There is no indication of whether anyone felt such a "confidential" meeting would violate Iowa's Open Meetings Law. And, nobody apparently questioned why, during a ten-month-long ongoing investigation, Teleconnect seemed unable to determine the name of the individual whose line they were blocking. Of course, whatever they did was justified because (in their own words), "Teleconnect had suffered substantial dollar losses as a result of the theft of long distance services by means of computer 'hacking' utilizing the computer billboard which is available at that number."

Teleconnect's most vile allegation was, "Many times, the hacker will enter the stolen authorization code on computer billboards, allowing others to steal long distance services by utilizing the code." But no harm was done by the blocking of the BBS number because, "During the ten month period the number was blocked, Teleconnect received no complaints from anyone claiming to be the party to whom the number was assigned." The fact Curt Kyhl had no way of knowing his line was being blocked might have had something to do with the fact that he didn't complain.

It was also pointed out I really had no right to complain since, "First, and foremost, Mr. Schmickley is not the subscriber to the number." That's true; I'm just a long-time Teleconnect customer refused service because of an alleged act performed by an unknown third party.

Then Teleconnect dumped on the Utilities Board staff a copy of a seven page article from Business Week Magazine, entitled "Is Your Computer Secure?" This article was totally unrelated to the theft of long-distance service, except for an excerpt from a sidebar story about a West German hackers' club. The story reported that, "In 1984, Chaos uncovered a security hole in the videotex system the German telephone authority, the Deutsche Bundespost, was building. When the agency ignored club warnings that messages in a customer's private electronic mailbox weren't secure, Chaos members set out to prove the point. They logged on to computers at Hamburger Sparkasse, a savings bank, and programmed them to make thousands of videotex calls to Chaos headquarters one weekend. After two days of this, the bank owed the Bundespost $75,000 in telephone charges."

Resolution with a Rubber Stamp

The staff of the Iowa Utilities Board replied to my complaint by letter on August 19th. They apparently accepted the vague innuendo submitted by Teleconnect without any verification. "Considering the illegal actions reportedly to be taking place on number (319) 236-0834, it appears the blocking was reasonable. However, we believe the Board should be notified shortly after the blocking and permission should be obtained to continue the blocking for any period of time."

However, it was also noted that, "Iowa Code 476.20 (1) (1987) states, 'A utility shall not, except in cases of emergency, discontinue, reduce, or impair service to a community or a part of a community, except for nonpayment of account or violation of rules and regulations, unless and until permission to do so is obtained from the Board." The letter further clarified, "Although the Iowa Code is subject to interpretation, it appears to staff that 'emergency' refers to a relatively short time..."

Since it appeared obvious the Utilities Board staff had not questioned or investigated a single one of Teleconnect's allegations, the staff's response was absolutely astounding. Accordingly, I filed a request for reconsideration on August 22nd.

Three points were raised in the request for reconsideration: (1) The staff's evaluation should have been focused on the denial of service to me and countless others of Teleconnect's 200,000 customers, and not just on the blocking of incoming calls to one BBS. (2) The staff accepted all of Teleconnect's allegations as fact, although not one bit of hard evidence was presented in support of those allegations. (3) In the words of the staff's own citation, it appeared that Teleconnect had violated Iowa Code 476.20 (1) (1987) continuously over a ten months' period, perhaps as long as four years.

Since Teleconnect had dumped a seven-page irrelevant magazine article on the staff, it seemed only fair to now offer a two-page completely relevant story to them. This was "On Your Computer - Bulletin Boards," from the June, 1988 issue of "Changing Times." This excellent article cited nine BBSes as "good places to get started." Among the nine listed BBSes was Curt Kyhl's "Stock Exchange, Waterloo, Iowa (319-236-0834)." Even the geniuses at Teleconnect ought to be able to recognize that this BBS, recommended by a national magazine, is the very same one they blocked for ten months.

You are now up-to-date on the entire story. Now, we are in the process of spreading the word so that all interested people can contact the Iowa authorities so they will get the message that this case is much bigger than the blocking of one BBS. You can help in two ways:

First, upload this file to bulletin boards you call. Let's get this message distributed to BBS and modem users across the nation, because the threat is truly to communications across the nation.

Second, read the notice appended to this article and ACT. The notice was distributed at the last meeting of Hawkeye PC Users' Group. If you are a Teleconnect customer, it is very important you write the agencies listed on the notice. If you are not a Teleconnect customer, but are interested in preserving your rights to uninhibited communications, you can help the cause by writing to those agencies, also.

If you are user of Teleconnect's long distance telephone service,you need to be aware of their "blocking" policy. Teleconnect representatives have indicated other "computer numbers" have been the objects of similar action in the past, and they (Teleconnect) have a "right" to continue such action in the future. Aside from the trampling of individual rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the US Constitution, this arbitrary action serves only to "punish the innocent" Teleconnect customers and bulletin board operators, while doing absolutely nothing to identify, punish, or obtain payment from the guilty.

Please write to Teleconnect. Explain how long you have been a customer. that your modem generates a significant amount of the revenue they collect from you, and that you strongly object to their arbitrarily deciding what numbers you may or may not call. Challenge their "right" to institute a "blocking" policy and insist the policy be changed. Send your protests to: Teleconnect Company, att: Mr. Dan Rogers, Vice President for Customer Service, 500 Second Avenue, S.E. Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401.

A complaint filed with the Iowa Utilities Board has been initially resolved in favor of Teleconnect. A request for reconsideration has been filed, and the time is now for letters to the State of Iowa. Please write to: Gerald W. Winter, Supervisor, Consumer Services, Iowa State Utilities Board, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. And to: James Maret, Office of the Consumer Advocate, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

[Editors' Note: Jerry Cross is looking into the issue of blocking by phone companies here in Michigan. We eagerly look forward to his article.]

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Telecommunicating Tips

by John Nagy (CHAOS)

A little-know cause of modem problems is reversed polarity at the phone jack. As many of us install our own extensions, we may not observe it *sometimes* can make a difference which wire goes where. An XM301 modem can fail to auto-answer (or operate at all) if the phone wires are reversed, while users of 2400 baud modems may find connection problems or line noise can be relieved by correcting the phone polarity.

Did you know most phone companies will want to sock you for a Business Rate Phone Line if you run a BBS? Even if it is a private and not for profit board, several companies have pressed for, and received, judgements against BBS operators for back charges at the higher commercial rates.

The key to being charged as a business? Advertising the phone number. Yes, if you make the number public or someone else announces your number in a message on another BBS, you can be said to be advertising, and thus, a business user. Beware. I can't believe this happens much, but it happened to Steven Kamradt, SysOp of Merlyn's Rainbow in Florida. I hope the phone companies don't read the back pages of Computer Shopper where hundreds of BBSes are "advertised."

While we are talking about phones, I've been asked if "data quality" lines are really needed for a BBS or a home phone used for modeming. It all depends on your area and what baud rate you expect to use. Some phone companies will pry a bit if you add a second phone line (looking for business rate revenue!). If you say you plan to use it for your computer, they will immediately try to convince you that a special grade line is required... at a premium rate. If you have already used the regular lines in your area at the transfer speed you expect to be using and found them reasonably trouble free, don't even mention "computers" when you order your new line.

It is true that in some areas the lines are always too noisey for reliable data use at any speed, and almost anywhere, the lines are unsuitable for sustained 9600 baud use. Just know what you need before you over-buy. A friend of mine was talked into data-quality line charges... although he uses only a 300 baud modem, and only occasionally. A sad waste.

[Editors' Note: Speaking from our experience, the local or long-distance phone companies did not pressure or suggest getting a data line even though the company's representative was informed the second line was for a computer bulletin board.]

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Many people have asked which Mailing List program we use at Best Electronics, we currently use Super Mailer+ from Royal Software. Super Mailer program (D) $39.95

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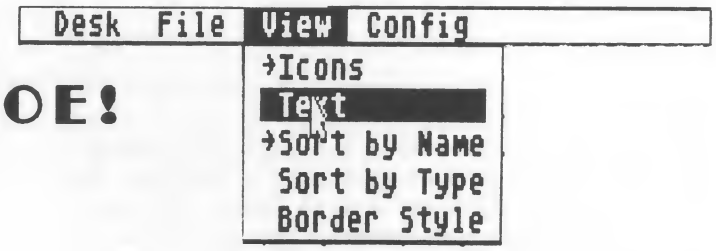
Hardware upgrade kits and P.C. boards that require the 41256K ram chips have been put on hold because of the high price of ram chips. We hope to ship again once ram chip prices start to drop down!

Get Up and GOE!



by Bill Rayl

In the 8bit Atari community, one of the hottest topics of discussion centers around the new ST-like graphic operating environments hitting the market. Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with David Sullivan of Total Control Systems, developer of GOE for the 8bit. Dave had just finished a very successful demonstration of the cartridge-based operating system at the Glendale AtariFest. During our conversation, Dave spoke of the past, persent and future plans for the GOE cartridge.

In the Beginning

Dave first began work on GOE, in a roundabout way, back in 1986 when he produced a public domain program called GOS which he donated to his local User Group. After spending about three months working on what was later to become GOE, Dave was approached by a company called Merrill Ward. Merrill Ward asked Dave to convert their Celebrity Cookbook program from the IBM to other machines. For nearly a year and a half, GOE was set aside. Then, in late April/early May of 1988 Total Control Systems and Merrill Ward entered negotiations over the marketing of GOE.

Then things fell apart. For legal reasons, Dave could not comment on why Total Control Systems and Merrill Ward parted company. He did say, "Not only are the statements Mr. Merrill is making saying I missed contracted deadlines false, there never were any contracts signed."

Merrill Ward, reportedly under the new name of USA Media, is focusing attention on the marketing of Reeve Software's Diamond OS. Total Control Systems is going ahead with production of the GOE cartridge. According to Dave, the demo disk Merrill Ward was using for promotion of GOE was actually derived from the 1986 public domain GOS program and didn't do justice to the final product.

For anyone who purchased this demo disk from Merrill Ward for $5, Total Control Systems is willing to credit this $5 toward purchase of the GOE cartridge.

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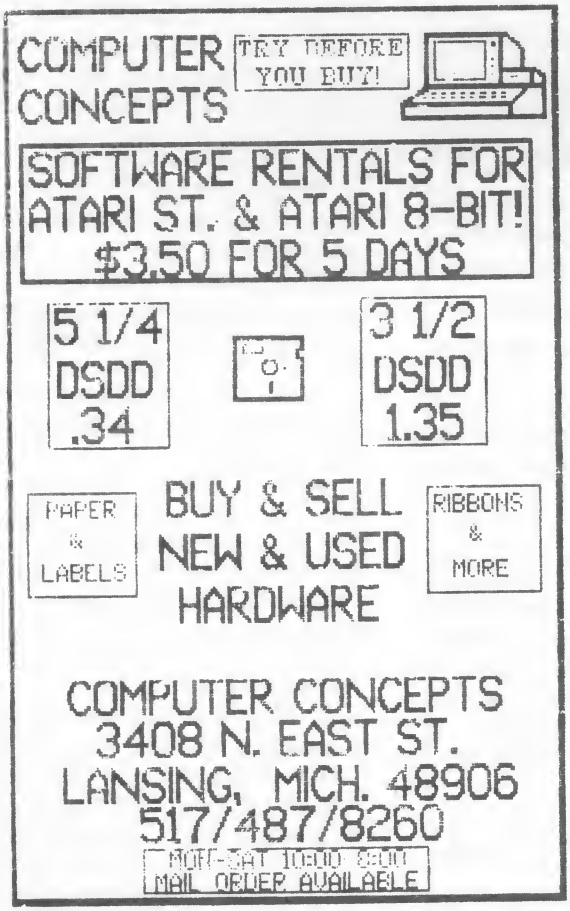
Plug It In and GOE

GOE, which will begin shipping to dealers in late October, is a 64K ICD "piggyback" cartridge allowing users to plug in additional cartridges with ease. Built into the cartridge is the graphic operating system, the desktop, a number of fonts and icons and three desk accessories -- a notepad, calculator and an ST-like Control Panel. The cartridge also comes with information on how to use the graphic interface routines in your programs and source code for the three included accessories. A coupon allowing GOE owners to purchase Total Control System's wordprocessor and paint programs for only $14.95 will also be included in the package for a limited time.

Until the cartridge appears in the stores in late October, GOE can be purchased directly from Total Control Systems for only $50, so you can get the whole package for $65! Dave added that the wordprocessor will support the Atari XEP-80 and multiple fonts while the paint program "is a NeoChrome workalike" that allows 128 colors (!) for creating your masterpieces.



The GOE cartridge itself supports 40, 64 and 80 column displays (with the 64 column support for ease of viewing on TV screens). The operating system has built-in icons, windows, drop-down and pop-up menus which can be rotated anywhere on the desktop and routines for drawing polygons and adding patterns and fills. Within drop-down menus, you can have submenus and scrolling menus. Menus can even be placed inside windows if the programmer chooses.

Total Control Systems will be releasing GOE Develop shortly, a complete "developer's kit" for MAC65 programmers. According to Dave, all the features of GOE are also accessible through ACTION! and even in BASIC. (The GOE cartridge allows direct access to the BASIC built into your 8bit Atari.)

Future GOE Products

By making the graphic interface accessible through the most popular currently used programming languages, GOE will no doubt cause an upsurge in PD and shareware software. Total Control Systems is already working on a terminal program and database using GOE's windowing environment. Dave said preliminary tests have also been done on the feasibility of a GOE Desktop Publishing *cartridge*. The tests have gone well, and Dave is confident they can produce a "miniature Timeworks Publisher" that would not use system memory for the actual program! If Total Control Systems hears of enough enthusiasm for this product, they will begin work on it in earnest. People wishing to voice interest for this product can call Total Control Systems at (619) 270-0111.

Special User Group Purchases

As mentioned earlier, the GOE cartridge will be hitting the dealer shelves in late October. When the cartridge becomes available in stores, Total Control Systems will increase their $50 direct purchase price in order to not "compete unfairly" with the dealers. Dave also pointed out that members of Atari User Groups can take advantage of a special club purchase.

If your club orders between five and nine GOE cartridges direct from Total Control Systems, your group can take 10 percent off the price. Better yet, if your organization purchases 10 or more, you save 20 percent!

For more information, contact Total Control Systems, 4156 Tolowa St., San Diego, CA 92119, (619) 270-0111.

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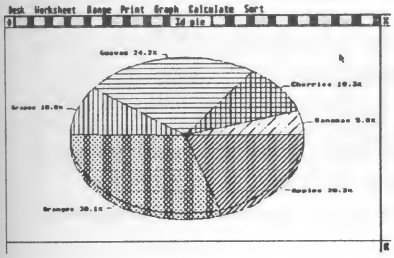

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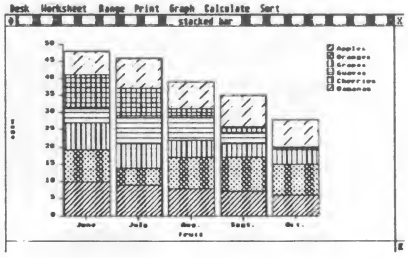

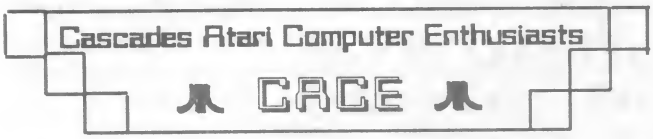

Cascades Atari Computer Enthusiasts, CACE, is the Atari Club in and around the Jackson County area. The main purpose of the club is to help inform new users and to promote the use of the Atari Computer in the community.

President	Brent Fisher	764-4599
Vice-President	Tim Hotchkiss	789-7533
Secretary	Joe Cripps	782-0199
Treasurer	Scott Boland	784-9246
Member at Large	Jim Boyce	522-4074
Editor	Jim Boyce	522-4074

The current membership dues are $14.20 per year, and are payable at any of the CACE monthly meetings, or by mail to the PO Box. Club membership includes access to the entire club software and publication libraries, along with a monthly published newsletter. Any written communication with CACE should be sent to: CACE, PO Box 6161, Jackson, MI, 49204.

Our meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month, from 1 p.m. to approx. 4 p.m. The meetings take place in the basement of the East Side Lounge at 2214 East Ganson, Jackson, Mi.

Fishin' Around by Brent Fisher

Starting off this month, I'd like to congratulate Tim Hotchkiss for stepping in to fill the shoes of Bob Kingsbury, who is leaving us as Vice-president for other endeavors. I apologize to Jim Boyce about that month's column not including the above information, but it had not as yet been made official. In case you're wondering what I'm typing about, in last month's column Jim said to read more about Tim in my column. I'd also like to say thanks to Bob for all the work that he has one for the club and to say that we'll miss him.

One thing that has been getting in my craw lately is the pounding Analog has received from Antic lately, I don't think that Antic has a right to say a thing especially since they have been doing such a poor job on coverage of the 8bit Atari lately. Also Analog has been putting out their issues on a regular basis and steadily improving their content and appearance since they began to publish again back in April. Not to mention the fact that they have about 80 to 90 percent 8bit material in each issue.

I realize you can do things faster and better with an ST vs the 8bit, but why spend the money if you can do what you need with an 8bit? We have excellent word processors, and though some would hate to admit it, we also have a large base of games. So, come on. Support your local 8bit (a bit corny I realize, but hey, I needed something to fill the space).

I believe it's past time that Mr. Boyce is congratulated for his efforts on the newsletter. In the past ten months he has managed, through much adversity and strife, to put out a fine newsletter and I would just like to say thank you to Jim for all the hard work he has done.

As most of you should know we appeared at the mall's Say kNOw To Drugs presentation. All in all, I think that it went pretty well. We had a lot of people stop by to see our display along with that of the JC3 club. I have to say a big thank you to Tim Hotchkiss for spending a lot of his free time out there manning the display. He had to go without needed sleep at times just to make sure that there was someone there to answer questions and show interested people our Atari.

I'm also surprised more people where unwilling to donate a little of their time to such a worthy cause, especially since drug use runs so ramped through our children. I'm also taking this time to thank Craig Schaff and Jim Boyce for giving of their precious time to help in this endeavor.

Anything Goes by Craig Schaff

Good Morning Atarians!! Hav. that was a good movie!! It was about a local guy who goes to the war front, with his 8bit Atari in his hands. He is faced with the impossible challenge of boosting moral of his brother computer soldiers. It is set in the rugged remote areas of the world where new programs are hard to come by! But wait! Just who is this person, where did he come from, and most importantly, what is a babel fish for any-ways? It all started long time ago in boot camp. Our hero- to-be just arrived with his 8bit in hand and wet behind the ears. He has no idea what the difference is between a monitor and a modem. His drill sergeant, Sergeant Interface (or In-your-face Interface as he was called behind his back), was a hard- as-nails, cut and dry, machine language instructor. He was as tough as they come. But as fate has it, Sarge, as they use to call him, came down with a terminal illness, a digital decease, and had to stay in a hospital and be monitored all the time.

Our hero, who hasn't been named yet (I don't know why), takes over the troop, and leads them on in his own style, changing the way people will live the rest of there lives (what the hell, it's make believe). From Boot Camp, our hero (his name will be coming up shortly),who has a sense of humor that isn't un-like that of Douglas Adams, gets orders to go to training school.

At school, his teacher was Ronnie Ramdisk, who was once, almost, but not quite, nearly hit by a falling meteorite, to be saved only by the fact that it totally missed the earth. Ronnie Ramdisk is also the head of the program storage system for instant retrieval (impressive sounding isn't it). But Ronnie Ramdisk has nothing to do with this story.

Any-ways, on with the story! (To be continued in next issue)

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CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

CHAOS is the Capitol Hill Atari Owner's Society, serving the Atari community of the Lansing, Michigan area. Membership dues are $15 per year and entitles members to a 1-year subscription to the Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from our regular library, and access to our libraries and other resources. If not using an official membership application, please include a list of your equipment and interests. Send inquiries regarding CHAOS, mail orders, memberships and so on, to: CHAOS, PO Box 16132, Lansing, MI 48901.

General meetings of the membership take place several times a year. 8bit and 16bit Special Interest Group meetings take place monthly. The ST INterest Group meets on the second Saturday of the month. The 8bit S.I.G. meeting takes place on the third Saturday. The meetings take place at the MSU Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road, Room 118, and begin at 10 a.m. Members and guests are welcome to any SIG meeting that interests them. Illegal copying, or any violation of coyright laws, is not condoned or allowed at any CHAOS sponsored function, including the club BBS.

President	Leo Sell	349-0404
Vice President	Guy Hurt	484-7675
Sec'y-Treasurer	Gary Ferris	393-2593
8bit Representative	Bill Johnson	675-7166
16bit Represenative	Brian Goluska	332-4415
Library Manager	John Baker	641-4430
General Pub. Librarian	I. Pothacamury	332-0558
ST Public Librarian	Chet Kapusinski	676-4539
XL/XE SIG Coordinator	Guy Hurt	484-7675
BBS Sysop	John Nagy	487-5646

President's Corner by Leo Sell

Good afternoon Atarians...it's time for news!! I have several pieces of news and information for CHAOS members this month.

First off, a new or stricter policy at the Physics Building does not allow the building to be opened before 10 a.m. on Saturdays. It is the responsibility of a student aide to open it up, and the aide could sleep in... anyway, the NEW starting time for both meetings is 10:10 a.m.

Another important bit of news is the Colossal Computer Sale dates have been changed. The new dates are December 3rd and 4th. CHAOS is sponsoring the sale. Guy Hurt is coordinating the actual CHAOS table displays. With the change of date, we lose the conflict with Comdex which means we could attract more national manufacturers and dealers. Volunteer your person and/or your equipment to Guy today. He'll need all the help you can give him to make this the best display ever.

Last announcement: don't forget the October Auction. The auction will replace the October 8bit meeting (it's a general meeting). Bring your items to sell and your $. We will sell almost anything...with preference given to computer/electronic equipment. There are always some incredible buys. See you there.

Other news...since the October meeting is a General Meeting, we may be discussing certain concerns we have with MAM, as well as a couple of very exciting software products for the 8bit. See you there!!

GENESEE ATARI GROUP

Serving the Flint area

The Genesee Atari Group is a nonprofit group of Atari owners in and around Flint, Michigan. Our purpose is to provide assistance to users of Atari Personal computers. This organization is not affiliated with Atari, Inc.

GAG meets on the second Wednesday of the month at Neithercut School, located at 2818 Crestbrook Drive, Flint. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. during the school year, we also have a 4th Saturday session for second-shift workers. All are welcome. GAG is a participating member of the Michigan Atari Magazine. Membership in GAG includes a subscription to MAM and access to our large library of PD software, Hardware, and magazines. Membership is $15 a year.
General meetings: October 12 & November 9
Saturday Workshops: October 22 & November 26
Information: FACTS BBS 736-3920 Jerry Cross (voice) 736-4544

President's Report

This month is election time! If you would be interested in helping to run the club, WE NEED YOU! Several of current officers will not be running this year, and that leaves several openings that must be filled!

There will be an AtariFest in Toronto in November. I don't have the date yet, but I'll announce it at the meeting, and in the next issue. If you would like to attend, give me a call. I will attempt to form a car pool if I can get enough people interested. The general gameplan will be to leave Flint around 5 a.m., and arrive in Toronto at 10 a.m. and return at 6 p.m. It is also possible to stay the night if you are interested. Contact one of the officers if you would like to attend. That's it for now, see you at the meeting.

Jerry Cross

GKAUG GREATER KALAMAZOO ATARI USERS GROUP

GKAUG meets the second Saturday of each month at 11:00 am in the Dewing Hall, room 305, on the Kalamazoo College Campus, Corner of Academy & Monroe. Dues are $25/yr.

President	Frank Fellheimer	657-6106
Vice President	Dan Youngs	
Treasurer	Dave Bryant	
Sr. Librarian	Steven Buechler	
Librarian	Dale Vincent	
Archiver	Dave Oldenburg	
ST Chairman	Jim Zinke	
SysOp	Alex Stevens	
GKAUG BBS	(616) 657-2665	

Well, it looks like the summer heat has finally subsided... gee, I can hardly wait for the snow?!? What a summer, I spent most of my time in the house (it's air-conditioned) and did quite a few computer projects... who wants to work outside in that heat?

We had about 20 people at the picnic. It turned out just fine, even had some wives and kiddies there too. We managed to get in some games, chit-chat, eat and drink. I hope we get to do this again next year.

Oh yes, our first meeting for the fall season, lots of people there. We even had some ST users. We talked about our projects of the past few months; our DC power supply is ready for a trial run. Last week's thunderstorm played "games" with the BBS. The new supply (assembled by Fred Farleigh) will help keep the BBS up and running after a power outage.

We had a complete demonstration of the "Pro" BBS. We borrowed the system disks so it had everything on it. We were even able to add additional users to the BBS log at the meeting.

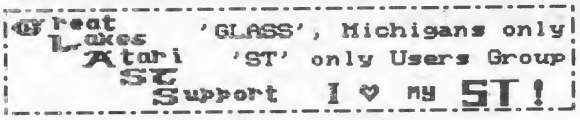
I have received information from one of our members (Celina Acquaro) Atari is showing television advertisements for a number of its games in New York City. Maybe some day we will get to see one also.

We are thinking of expanding our user group to accomodate 16bit users. I mean, other systems, as well as the Atari. Keep in mind we are currently, and will continue to support the Atari 8bit machines, but we can take advantage of the experience of other Atari users that have gone to more "modern" sytems. This would open up many more options for us all. We will be discussing this in greater length at the next meeting (October 8th). Be there, you can voice your opinion too.

Have you noted the price increase for membership?? Yah, it's time. The magazine costs a bit more and the BBS has to be paid for also. We try to keep this cost as low as possible, but we still need your support, so don't let this keep you from paying your dues. Remember, we have the Analog Disks, Antic Disks, a huge library of books and disks as well as experienced people to help you along. Well worth the cost!

Frank Fellheimer

Next month: 1. Analog #64;2. Discussion on 16bit computer support; 3. BBS title screen creation; 4. Font Creator... Again??; 5. How about some Games too!



GLASS Information: General Meeting, 1st Thursday every month at Athens High School, room 1528, 6 p.m. until 9:30 p.m., located in Troy, at 4333 John R Road, 1/10 mile north of Wattles (17 Mile). Guests are welcomed and encouraged to come! Planning Meeting, 2nd Thursday at same location. Members only. Mailing Address -- GLASS, P.O. Box 99737, Troy, Mi., 48099. Phone -- (313) 828-1653 (Steve Mileski, President) for info.

From The Desk Of The President Sept. 11, 1988

To start this month I would like to thank an especially hard working, dedicated GLASS member. His efforts and time provided us with our first NewsDisk, including the location, selection, and utilization of a public domain newsdisk program, and the gathering (and in some cases writing) of forty-two (42) text files of reviews, articles, letters, news items, and commentary on Atari ST software, hardware, and company information. He also is one of the primarily responsible persons who brought you the clubs newsletter throughout the year. His articles and reviews graced and enhanced the Michigan Atari Magazine. His attendance at the general meetings and planning meetings this year (so far) is 100 percent. He coordinated and donated to every Public Domain/Shareware software program that we have sponsored. And he has been a great source of downloads from GENIE, DELPHI, COMPUSERVE, and local BBSs. So, without further ado, join me in honoring the president's MEMBER OF THE YEAR - Byron Johnson!

The NewsDisk itself (which I just finished viewing) was more than I had hoped for. Aside from finding it useful and informative I also found several items of information which I had wanted for some time. These include an article about the DESKTOP.INF file and how to modify it, an article about the floppy disk format with information on the directory and FATS table, and a list of computer stores in the area that handle the ST products. This newsdisk is *great* and deserves the support by all. If you are the type of person who would rather read from hard-copy (paper) just select the articles you want to read and print them on your printer. So, just bring a formatted floppy to the meeting and get the current months NewsDisk free. Past months news disks can be purchased from the Public Domain Library.

The general meetings have been great. By the time you read this the October meeting will be over. We are scheduled to deal with various printers. We expect to have at the meeting a CITOH 8510+NLQ (9 pin), an OKIMATE 20 (9 pin), an EPSON LQ800 (24 pin), a RADIO SHACK CGP220 (9 pin color graphics), and a plotter printer, probably an EPSON. We also are attempting to acquire for show an Atari SMM804 laser printer, possibly hooked-up to a MEGA-ST.

The November meeting will feature a show and talk by Ed Hanson on hard-drives. Ed, who is an electronics engineer, has built, modified, and expanded hard-drives. He should be able to answer any questions you may have if you are considering adding a hard-drive to your system or expanding the one you have. And believe me, a hard- drive can make your ST fly! I have had an Atari SH204 20 meg. drive for a year now and can't imagine having to do without it!

The Public Domain Library Catalog has now been expanded to 13 pages with pages 10 to 13 showing update date of August 23, 1988. If you don't have a catalog you can get one at the meetings for $1.00. All updates are free, also at the meetings.

Well, looks like our MIDI-MAZE night will be a go! It's scheduled for the first Thursday of December 12/01/88 from 6:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. If you are not a member of GLASS and would like to attend (no charges) please call me at (313) 828-1653 to r.s.v.p. Midi-Maze is being put on for guests and we would like for you to come. It will be held in Troy, Mi. (17 miles north of Detroit) at the Athens High School in room 1528 with GLASS User Group signs pointing the way. There will be some (small) prizes for single round winners until they are gone. The first prize to be given away will be the Midi-Maze program. I would like to thank Ron Keiler, owner and operator of Rite-Way Computers, for donating the Midi-Maze program for this special night. Rite-Way is located at 11557 12 Mile Road in Warren and carries a large stock of Atari ST hardware and software. So don't forget to mark December 1, 1988 on your calendar for GLASS MIDI-MAZE NIGHT.

I've been an owner and supporter of Word Perfect for about nine months now and am still very pleased with the software and support. Now they (Word Perfect Corporation) have announced an upgrade. If you own Word Perfect just call 1-800-321-3271 for the free upgrade. Have your license number, name, and address

handy and they will ship it to you right away. Thank you WP!

Good news, GLASS now owns three (3) computers for training and demonstration. Aside from our original two 520STfm's (upgraded to one meg.) we have just recently purchased a 1040ST Color system. Now we don't have to borrow parts of systems from members for our meeting nights. Also, if you are a member in good standing and your system farkles on you (you know, gets sick and has to go to the computer doctor) we can loan one to you on a short term to keep you in computing while your system is in the hospital. Another service and reason to be a member of GLASS.

As a final item, the collections for DSLIDE/PICSW7 shareware has closed and a check is on its way to the author. The next public domain software being collected for is SANDPAP.PRG which stands for Still Another News Disk Program. This program, written by Joe Andrews in GFA Basic, is used in our GLASS NewsDisk. We hope to see a high percentage of our members donate at least $1.00. to be collected over the next three months and sent to Joe. So, get the GLASS NewsDisk, look it over, and donate if you like what you see. Let's show our support to the writers of good public domain and shareware software!

Look forward to seeing you at the next meeting,

Steve Mileski

GRAND RAPIDS ATARI SYSTEMS SUPPORTERS

Meeting: Wednesday, November 2, 1988. Wyoming Public library, 3350 SW., Time: 6:30 p.m.

George Nosky	President/Treas.	(616) 942-1527
2440 Parkridge Dr., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506		
Gary Heitz	Vice President	(616) 676-0112
Marvin Waid	Secretary	(616) 866-1998
Chuck Baughman	Librarian	(616) 795-7373
Gerry Borysiak	Director	(616) 896-9358
Steve Gilbert	Director	(616) 891-1785
Marek Kulikowiec	Director	(616) 957-2646
Tim Feenstra	Director	(616) 784-6230

President's Comments

Summer is history, we are well into the fall season, snow is not far off and GRASS is back into the swing of things for the '88-'89 season. It was nice to see some faces at the September meeting which we haven't seen for a while. GRASS welcomes Ted Recker who lives in Hasings. Ted joined us in September.

Your board met September 21th to plan the new year. Since this is being written in mid-September, results are not available to summarize here. You will have been appraised of our activities at the October meeting. However, as I've said before -- this is your Club -- we are very much open to any suggestions from each and every one of you. We are using, as a guide, the results of the survey which most of you filled out.

Our kick-off demo was ably done by Art Miller. Art showed us the demo disk, Graphic Operating Environment froum Merrill Ward. In case you missed it, this is the 8bit Atari ST-like operating system. It is an interesting piece of software. I'm sure most of us hope it makes it to market. Art also converted a Tracball which he used in place of a mouse. Thanks Art, for a demo well done.

Brian Baughman did a nice demo of Infiltrator which was our September raffle. Steve Davis was the winner. Congradulations! A schedule for future demos was developed at the Board meeting. It will be published in the next issue of MAM.

It's getting time to think about elections again. Our By-laws stipulate that I appoint a Nominating Committee at the November meeting. Please let me know if you would be willing to seive on this very important committee. We should have three people. Also, give some serious thought about running for an office of a director's position. Yes, it takes some time and effort, but not that much. We have a good group of people in GRASS who are willing to help. This makes the job much easier. Please give it some very serious thought.

Chuck Baughman made a motion that was passed at the September meeting. The motion directed GRASS to make a donation to the authors of three specific shareware programs. Checks have been sent to authors of 850/1030 Express, Daisy-Dot II and our own Steve Gilbert for his shareware for bowling leagues. This is an excellent program that bowling secretaries can use to keep all their league's statistics.

I hope to see all of you at the November meeting!

George Nosky

M·A·C·E MACE MICHIGAN·ATARI·COMPUTER·ENTHUSIASTS

Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiast membership dues are $20 per family, and members receive the Michigan Atari Magazine. Members are also entitled to purchase disks from the 8bit and ST public domain software libraries. These libraries are always growing and expanding, with the 8bit library at more than 400 disks and the ST near 200! Eightbit disks are $3 and the ST disks are $4 each.

The most important benefit you receive is the help and support from (and interaction with) other Atari owners. If you're having a problem, need advice about a software package or whatever, your MACE officers can and will help. That's what a user group is all about -- helping each other get the most from our computing. The ST sig meets currently on the first Tuesday of the month and there is a small admission charge to defray room costs. General meetings are on the Third Tuesday, at the Southfield Civic center at Evergreen and 10-1/2 Mile Rds.

Contact MACE at PO Box 2785, Southfield, MI 48037. If you contribute an article which is published in MAM, you are entitled to a free disk from one of the club's libraries.

MACE Board Numbers

MACE WeST	(313) 582-0657 (3/12/2400)
MACE East	(313)978-1685 (3/1200)
The College Board	(313)478-9647 (3/1200)
Molin's Den	(313)420-0407 (3/1200)
DownRiver Outpost	(313) 675-4660

The September MACE meeting was election of officers. Because the meeting took place after the MAM deadline, there aren't any minutes from this meeting. MACE officers are: President, Bill Rayl; Vice President, Kip Kiefer; Treasurer, Heather Neff; Meeting Coordinator, Bob Retelle; Corresponding Secretary, Sharie Middlebrook; Recording Secretary, Mike Olin; Editor, Pattie Rayl; 8Bit Librarian, Ted Newkumet; 16Bit Librarian, Ed Hanson; Membership, Pattie Rayl(313) 973-8825.

MACE EAst BBS: A History by Mike Lechkun

The story of MACE EAst is really a short history of MACE and a BBS program called AMIS. To discuss MACE EAst is to discuss all three topics. You pretty much know the story of MACE. Its purpose then as now is to supplement the non-support given to the customers of Atari Corp.

During the late '70s and early '80s, a new buzzword was developing. It was "telecommunicating," and it pleased the folks at AT&T to no end. What you did was stick your telephone receiver into this pair of suction cups, dialed your buddy's computer and proceeded to "talk" over the wires. This took even the best touch-typist three times as long to say things she/he could just speak in to the receiver.

To have this ability to telecommunicate, software needed to be developed. Seems Ward Christianson of Chicago had this idea to leave his computer on all night and let people call and leave message texts to him or to other callers. Thus was born the Remote Bulletin Board Service. I don't believe Ward invented it, but he sure had a hand in refining it (in fact, his is the oldest non-commercial BBS in existance today).

Anyway, BBS software was being written by a team of MACE members with much of the coding by Tom Giese. Sad to say, Tom has been converted over to the Amiga world. With the encouragement of Atari and the donation of hardware, the first AMIS Bulletin Board System was started. AMIS stands for Atari Message and Information System became an overnight success.

Distributed through MACE and Atari, AMIS was the standard BBS software was written to. For many years, AMIS and FoReM were the only two BBS programs in existance, and MACE made AMIS virtually free to the public. The fact AMIS is still used on many systems attests to it's quality, even with other pd BBSes like Oasis Jr. and FoReM 2.6 readily available.

AMIS does have its shortcomings. It's in Basic, but, being in Basic, can be easily modified by the intermediate to advanced programmer.As a current sysop, I'd like to take credit for the way the AMIS program on MACE EAst is now, but most of the technical stuff was done by Jim Steinbrecher, Sharie Middlebrook, Mike Mitchell, Arlan Levitan, etc., etc. Cosmetics touches to a program are easy; real programming is tough! To make a long story short, AMIS was developed by MACE members, and why it is the program of choice on MACE EAst. I suppose that makes us the "official AMIS support BBS."

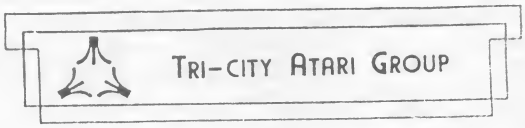
What happened to the "History" part of this article? OK, here it is: When Giese et. al. wrote AMIS, someone had to take it home and run it. There was reluctance to stick it in one of the local Atari stores as it could not be accessed or maintained on a continuous basis. So Giese and partner Tom MacLaney had the responsibilities of running the first Atari BBS in the country. They ran the "MACE BBS" for about eight months when their enthusiasm for it waned. The BBS had to find a new home, and MACE President Arlan Levitan graciously offered his home for the board.

A year or so down the line, MACE BBS found itself travelling again. Then-MACE President, yours truely, volunteered to house the board for this go around. It was during this tenure the folks on the west side of town demanded equal access and lower phone bills. The BBS had gained a national reputation and was constantly busy. It was decided to purchase more equipment and create a west-side BBS, MACE WEST. Except for a short while, Sharie Middlebrook has been the sysop.

About four years down the road, sysoping burned me out. I handed the BBS over to Mike Landis of Clawson, where it stayed until Mike could not devote the time he wanted to towards it. The search was on again. MACE President Tom Sturza formed a search committee to find a more stable home for what was now referred to as MACE EAST. Could Tom and his committee find someone who had the time to devote? Doug Geiss was selected and ran the board for about five months. By this time, I had already missed the sysoping chores and was running a BBS on my own equipment. When the position of Sysop opened up again, I jumped at the opportunity!

And so we come to the present. After a rough restart, MACE EAst is back again. It's currently 24 hours, 300/1200 baud. The phone number is (313) 978-1685. I've even devised an acronym for the initials EAst: Eight-bit Atari source for telecommunications. Although MACE EAst doesn't have the greatest amount of downloads, you'll find 8bit Atari support in an active message base, and the weekly posting of ZMagazine. You'll also notice that EAst is not all in caps or lower case...that's because Sharie runs MACE weST on an ST.

Having been around the Atari scene practically as long as MACE has run a BBS, I believe this article to be correct. My thanks go to Don Neff for having confidence and sticking with me and most especially to Sharie Middlebrook who cheerfully answered even the dumbest of questions I could bounce off her. Sysoping can make good friends off-line as well as on-line!



The Tri-City Atari Users Group meets the first Saturday before the 18th of every month at 2:00 pm at the Rudy Zauel Memorial Library on the corner of Shattuck and Center in Saginaw. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows: October 15, 1988 & November 12. 1988.

LeRoy Valley	President	686-6796
Marty Schmidt	Treasurer/Sec.	792-6029
Al Jennings	ST Disk lib.	790-1980
Ted Beauchamp	8bit Disk Lib.	686-8872
Char Davis	8bit Editor	686-4170

Club dues are $20.00 per year. For this fee you get the Michigan Atari Magazine, support for both the 8bits and ST's, and full access to the clubs public domain library. We currently have 150 8bit disks and 70 ST disks. 8bit disks cost $1.00 each, and ST disks cost $2.00 each. Check your mailing label. If you need to renew or you haven't even joined yet, then do it now!

Letter from the Prez

Neil Demo has set up a bulletin board in the Saginaw area, and it is also the official TAG BBS system. The

BBS is called the Dark Side BBS and you can reach it at 517-799-3895. The Dark Side supports 300/1200/2400 baud and costs $6.00 per year for membership.

STill to Come!

It's October, fall is in the air, and it's time to turn from all of these "serious" meetings we've been having and have some fun! This month will feature games, and we've got some of the newest and hottest to demo! Al Jennings will be showing us Moon Patrol. This game was a classic on the 8bits, and has been recently released by Atari for the ST. The graphics are better, the sounds are great, and play is comparable to the actual arcade game! Show up and see this hot new game. Neil Demo will follow Al with a demo of subLogics new game, Jet ST. Styled after the popular Flight Simulator, this game allows you to fly a jet in combat situations. You can even use Flight Simulator scenery disks!

Our newest member (Mike Ranger) will end the meeting with demos of Typhoon Thomson for the ST, and Jewels of Darkness and Silicon Dreams for the 8bits. As usual, I will have a disk of the month featuring (of course) games! Show up for all the fun...you might see just the thing you want for Christmas (it's not THAT far away you know...).

RelicST to Relish!

Neil Demo started off the September meeting with a demo of DeskCart, a cartridge that provides you with all sorts of useful goodies. DeskCart only occupies a single accessory slot, but when you select it, you can choose from more than a dozen accessories! DeskCart gives you a calculator, notepad, ramdisk, print spooler, control panel and a whole lot of other goodies! Since it's a cartridge, it doesn't consume your precious memory (except for the ramdisk and spooler of course). Looks like a worthwhile addition to any ST (unless you own another cartridge that you need to keep plugged into the cartridge port - like Polydisk). After Neil finished, LeRoy hooked up his IMG Scan and demonstrated how it worked. Set up was very simple - just tape the fiber optic cables to the print head and plug IMG Scan into the cartridge port. The software is GEM-based and VERY user friendly. It even automatically sets itself up!

LeRoy performed several actual scans at the meeting, and they turned out very well. For more info, read the review in this issue...(or look for it in ST Informer).

LeRoy brought the meeting to the end with the disk of the month which contained: 1) ARC_LIST - A utility to list all of the files contained in all of the archives on drive X; 2) DEARC 1.1 - A utility that automatically dearcs a complete disk. It creates a separate folder for each archive; 3) AST_CHEF - Very nice recipe database, GEM-based; 4) GOODIES - Desk accessory loaded with (what else) goodies!; 5) DCOPY198 - Latest version (1.98c) of Dcopy.

See you all at the next meeting!

8bit Equipment Volunteers for September:
Ted Beauchamp 800 XL, Monitor, Disk Drive
ST Equipment Volunteers for September:
Jim Fleming 520 ST & Disk Drive
Bryant Lefreniere Monitor
Remember, if you're bringing equipment, please bring all of the necessary cables (such as power cords, monitor cords, mouses, etc.).

The next meeting of the Washtenaw Atari Users group will be held on October 11th, the feature topic will be Emulators. The meetings are held at 7:30 on the second Tuesday of each month at State Street Computer in Ann Arbor (State St., between E. William and Liberty).

General Meeting, 9/13/88 by Michael Olin, Sec'y

The September meeting of the Washtenaw Atari Users Group was called to order at 7:45 p.m. by the Honorable(!) Jon Brode, who presided over the election of Anton Malje as Newsletter Editor to replace Mike Ranger. Jon noted there would be a short discussion of Macintosh emulation on the ST, courtesy of guest speaker Eric Tobler of Lightening Bolt Computers.

Eric's praise for the ST was obvious, to say the least. The hardware similarities make it hard to understand why the Mac runs slower, has a smaller screen and slower disk access times. However, the "maturity" of the software packages available for the Mac make the ST a viable alternative to spending bundles of $.

Craig Harvey demonstrated the word processing capabilities of the buffer editor in Flash. Craig noted most of his word processing requirements are handled well, although there are few bells and whistles. The most important characteristic of this editor, from Craig's perspective, is its ability to retain and display the entire ST character set, and the flexibility to insert control and graphics characters directly from the keyboard.

Rod Smith demonstrated Word Perfect v4.1 (the August release) and praised the user support he has received from the company. This system DOES have all the bells and whistles, and is probably more word processor than most people will ever need. Rod showed the amazing configurability and the powerful features that make it a state of the art product.

Bob Retelle displayed his newly released Dungeon Master hint book "The Lost Scrolls of Mount Anaias," and discussed some of the features within. Bob noted that a portion of the book is sealed so that the hints are not disclosed all at once.

Russ Crum demonstrated Regent Word, noting his surprise that it is not a lot more popular considering its power and ease of use. Russ also announced the ST Disk Special included ST Writer v2.52, a text editor in a desk accessary, two spelling checkers with updateable dictionaries, and a print spooler (including assembly source code!)

Mike Millage demonstrated two game cartridges for the 8bits, Battlezone and Gato, and the meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.

From the Treasurer,

We had five renewals for August. David Brzezinski, Bob Retelle, James Sinkovich, Roger Tanner and Paul Walkowski. Welcome back, fellow Atarians.

Notice to all future and renewal members of WAUG. Membership dues are $15 per year, which includes 12 meetings and 12 issues of MAM. Please make checks and money orders payable to Dick Selke, and mail to 31139 Cooley Dr., Westland, MI 48185. Dick Selke

Gen A Sys

RH@SF@TRW (The Real World)
[reprinted from the July '88 issue of the SBACE Newsletter from Santa Barbara ACE.]

In the Beginning, there was chaos, and the universe was without form & void. The Lord looked upon his domain and decided to delare his presence. "I be," He said, and then, to correct His grammar, added "am." If the Lord had decided to work on irregular verb conjugation first, this wouldn't have happened. God would later curse the English language for its part, but in that moment, IBM came into being.

The Lord looked out upon the IBM He had created and said, "This is good." That's what he said, but he shook his head, wondered what the boys at the User Group would say, split the light from the dark and went to bed. Thus passed the beginning and the end of the first day.

On the second day, the Lord summoned IBM unto His presence. "There is chaos out there, and the universe is without form and void. I must correct this and I can use your help. Is there anything you can do for me?"

"I can take care of form," IBM replied. "Put me in charge of computers, and I will take care of form for you."

The Lord thought this was good and said, "Let there be computers. Let IBM have my powers of creation that pertain to computers and form." Thus saying, The Lord went off to his second day's work while IBM created the 1401.

On the third day, while the Lord was out, IBM decided to subdivide the assigned tasks. "Let there be systems that make the computer work, and let them be called operating systems. Let there also be systems that make use of the computer, and let them be called application systems."

But there were no programmers.

The next morning IBM had to give the Lord a status report.

"What did you do yesterday?" the Lord asked.

"I invented the operating system," IBM replied.

"You did?" the Lord shuddered. "Oh dear."

"Yes, I did," IBM confirmed, "but I find I need something you alone can provide."

"And what is that?" God asked.

"I need programmers to use my computer, to operate my operating system and to apply my applications."

"That can't be done now," said the Lord. "This is only the fourth day and there won't be people until the sixth day."

"I need programmers and I need them now," demanded IBM. "If they can't be people -- they can't be people, but we have to work this out today."

"Give me some specifications," God replied, "and I'll see what I can do."

IBM hastily worked up specs for programmers (are specs anything other than hasty?) and the Lord reviewed them.

The Lord knew the specs weren't sufficient but followed them anyway. He also made some programmers that did just what programmers were supposed to do, just to spite IBM. The programmers and IBM spent the rest of the day creating the assembler and FORTRAN.

On the morning of the fifth day, IBM reported to the Lord once again.

"The programmers you created for me have a problem," IBM said. "They want a programming language that is easy to use and similar to English. I told them you had cursed English, though I still don't know why. They wanted me to ask your indulgence on this."

The Lord had cursed English for good reason, but didn't want to explain this to IBM. He said, "Let there be COBOL," and that was that.

On the status report of the next day, IBM announced that computers had gone forth and multiplied. Unfortunately, the computers still weren't big enough of fast enough to do what the programmers wanted. The Lord liked the idea of going forth and multiplying and used this line himself later on that day. This sixth day being particularly busy, he declared, "Let there be MVS," and there was MVS.

On the seventh day, God had finished creation and computers had COBOL and MVS. The Lord and IBM took the day off to go fishing. IBM hung a sign on the door to help programmers in his absence: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again -- and have the following ready before calling IBM." This was the start, and by some accounts, the end of IBM documentation.

On the start of the second week, the programmers went over IBM's cathode ray tube directly to God.

"We have a horrible problem," they complained. "Our users want systems that perform according to their expectations."

"Users!" the Lord bellowed. "Who said that you should have users! Users are the difference between good and bad applications, a funtion I have reserved unto myself! Who authorized you to have users?"

The programmers replied, "Well,...IBM..."

"IBM!" God shouted. "You! You did this to my programmers! You gave them the knowledge of good and evil. For that, you shall suffer through eternity!

"Let there competition. Let it be called TELEX, and AMDAHL, and CDC, and MEMOREX, and TANDY, and ZENITH, and APPLE and, yes, ATARI."

The Lord went through the alphabet several times. "With all this competition, you shall still suffer the pain of anti-trust legislation all the days of your existance."

This was the start of the second week, and it seems an apporpriate place to conclude our report. In case you missed something, a summary of key points follows.

Users and their needs are, and always have been, a subject of dispute. Nobody can learn English because it is cursed by God. IBM manuals are doubly cursed, and therefore are twice as hard to understand. Of the programming languages, only COBOL can claim divine origin. People are people, but programmers are something else.

Computers may be a gift from Heaven, but there's no divine help in getting them to work. Because of IBM's initial assignment, there are more forms than anyone knows what to do with. Finally, chaos was part of the original state of the universe and not a product of the data processing industry.

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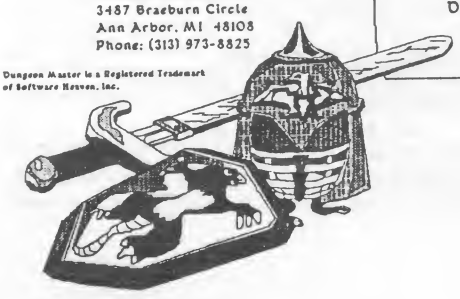

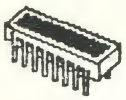

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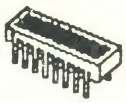

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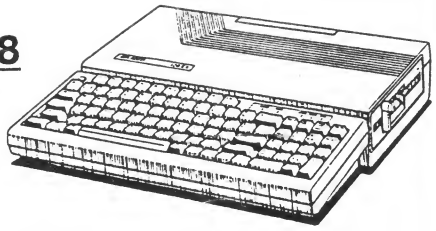

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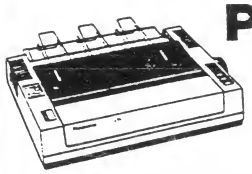

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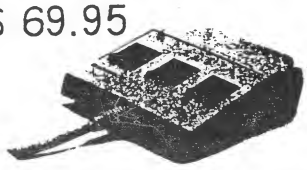

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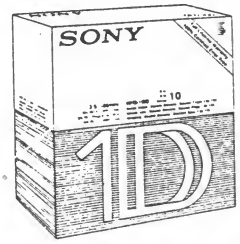

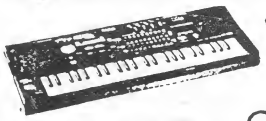

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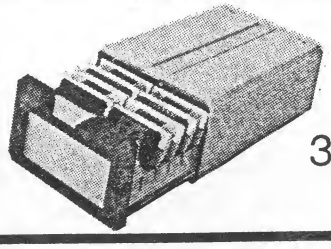

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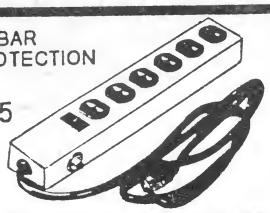

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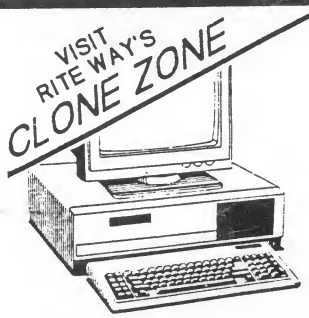

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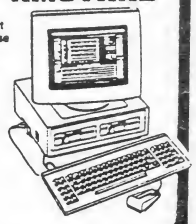

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